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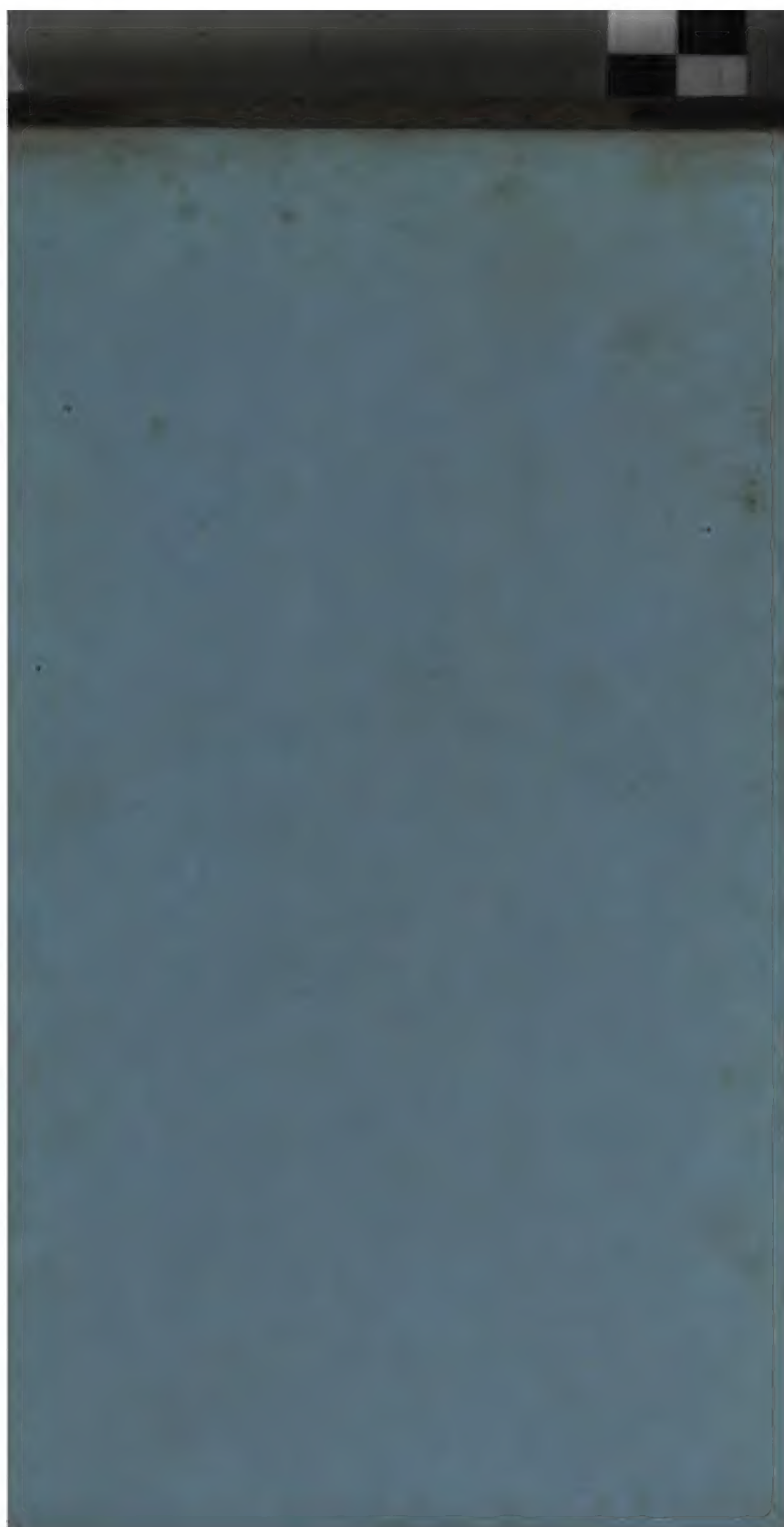
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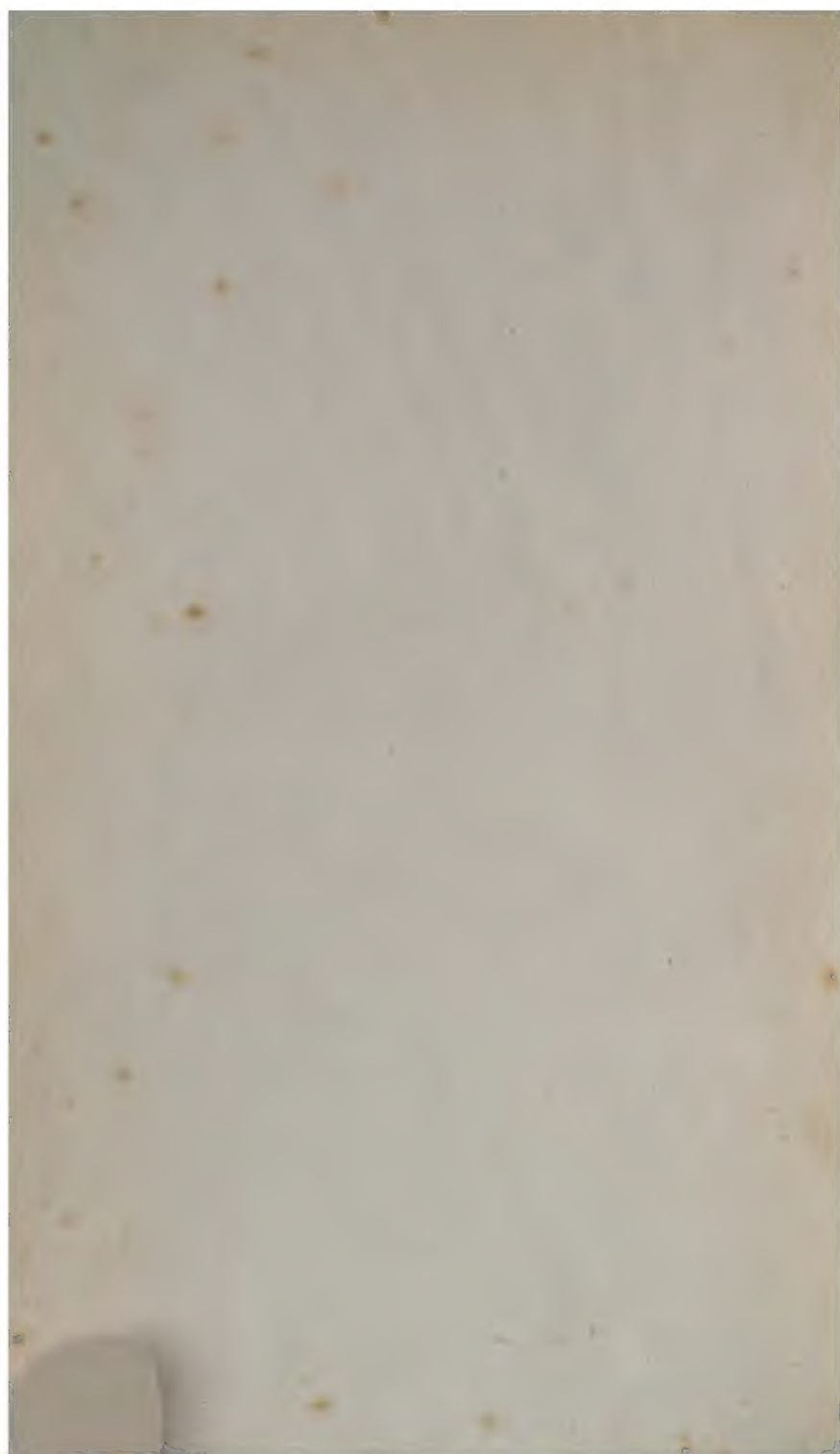
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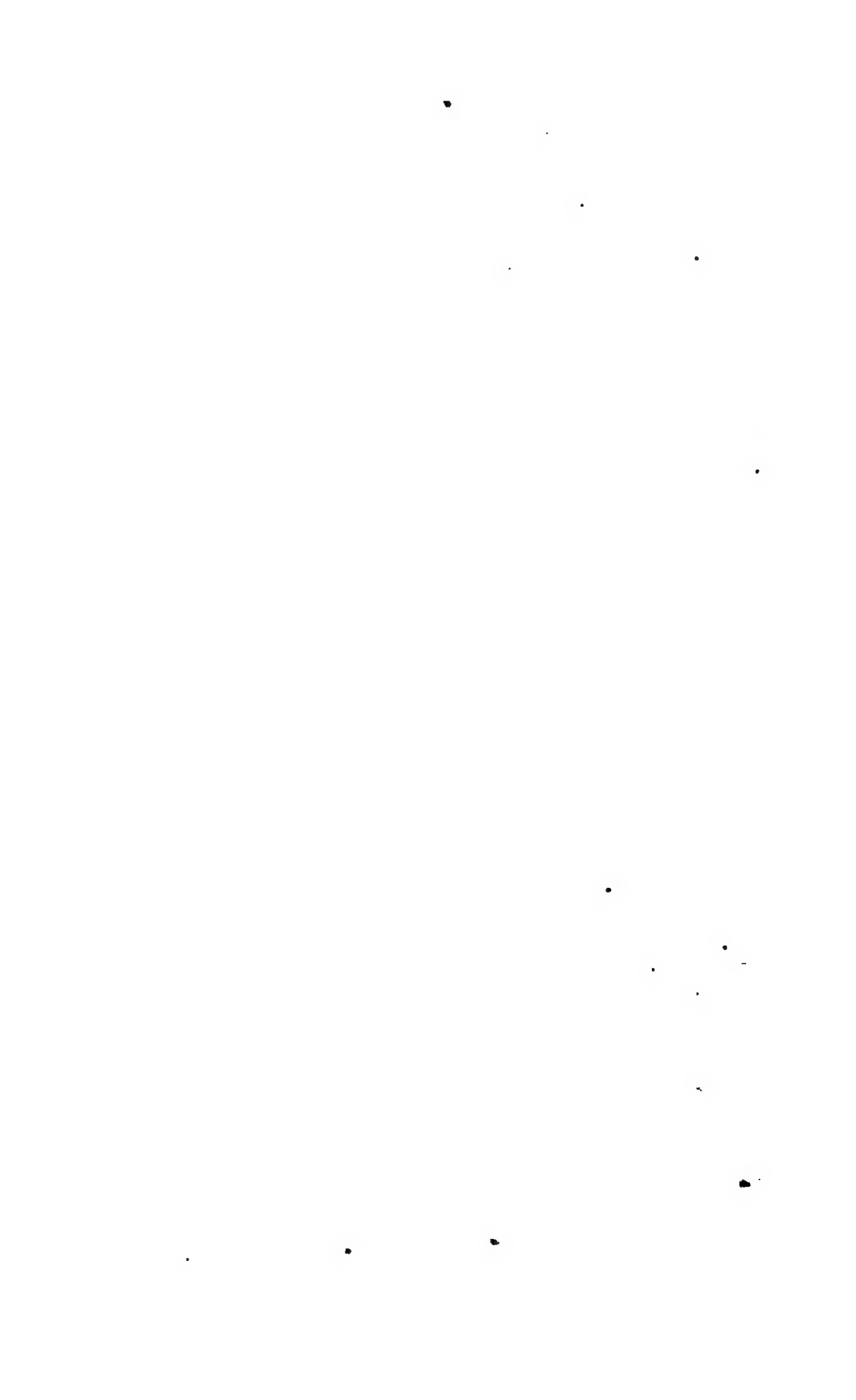
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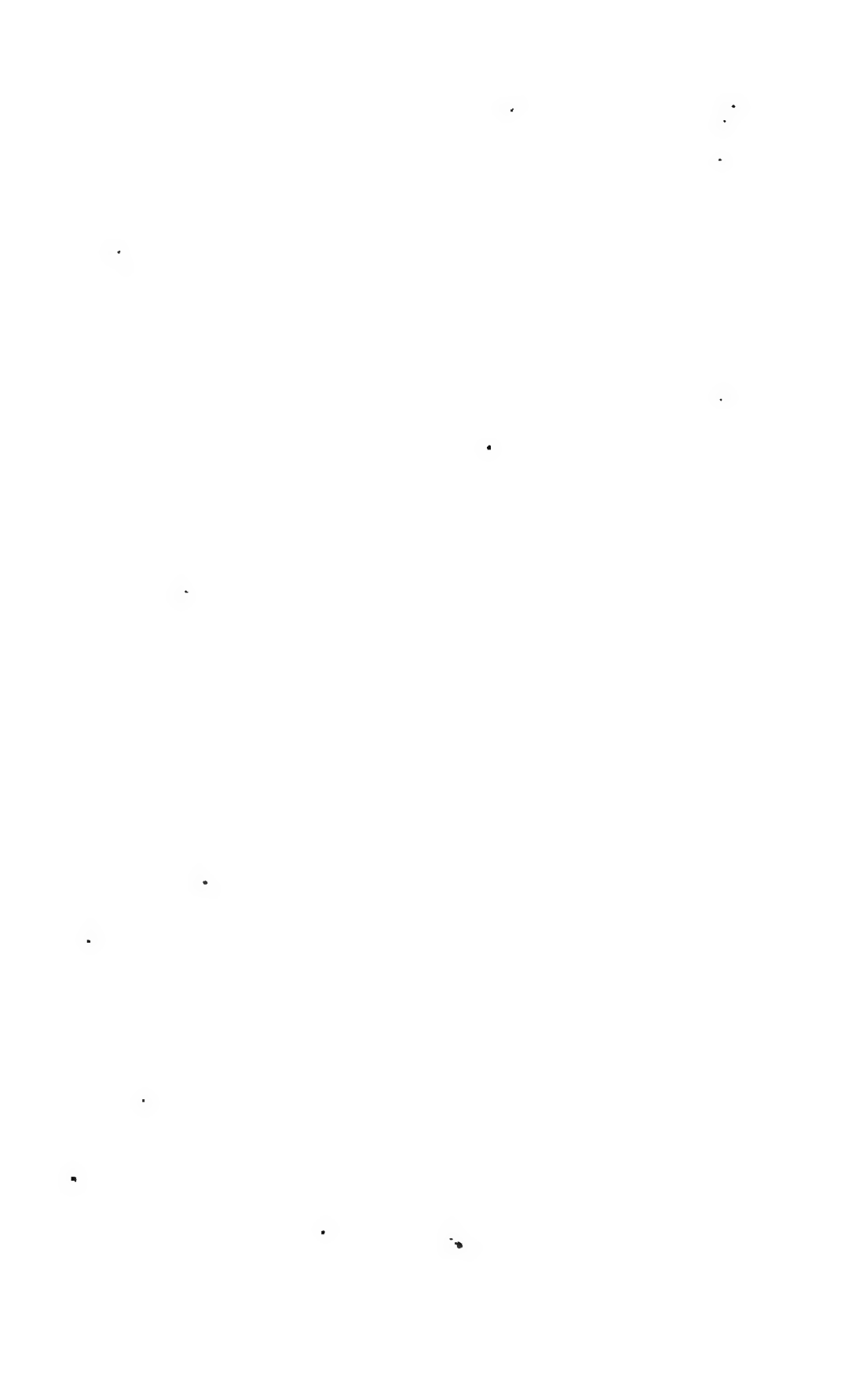


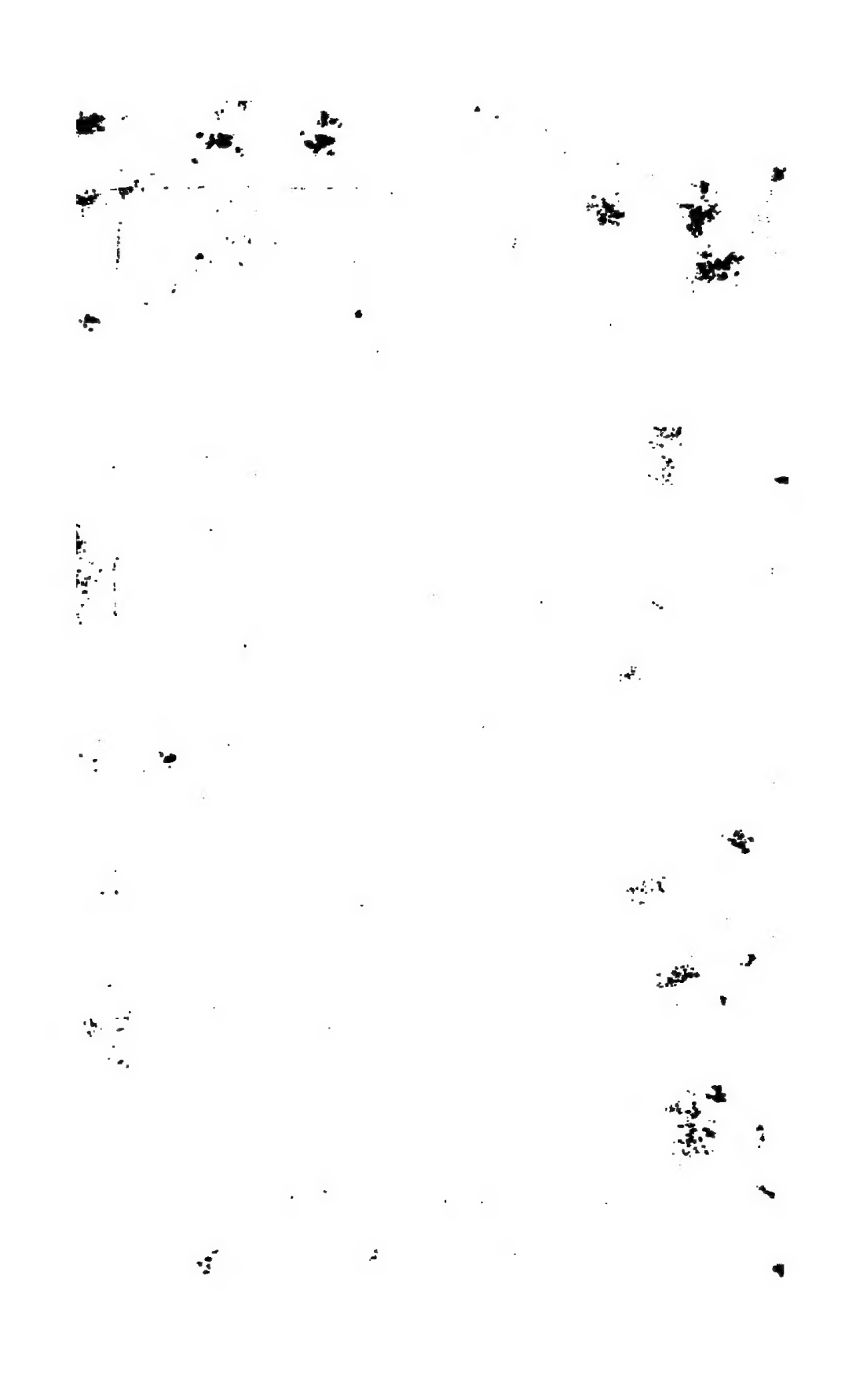














'A MERE CELL, HALF UNDERGROUND'

BELGRAVIA

AN

Illustrated London Magazine

VOL. XXXIII.

JULY to OCTOBER 1877



London

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BELGRAVIA

JULY 1877.

By Prop.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. WARDLAW.

IT is notoriously the custom with the best story-tellers to let their characters speak for themselves : to ticket them with adjectives such as 'good,' for example, instead of making them establish their own right to it, is the same sorry device as is adopted by early painters (not the 'old masters,' but the very young ones) who scrawl 'man,' 'woman,' 'tree,' below their counterfeit presentments of those objects, in order to prevent mistakes arising from their own defects of execution. But I have written 'good' Mrs. Wardlaw on our first introduction to that personage, because you had only to look at her to be convinced at once that she had a title to that epithet, if good humour, good temper, and good nature combined have any claim to it. It is curious that in the system of Lavater the point of 'age' is so slightly dwelt upon, when it is in fact the keynote of the whole of it. Just as an artist finds it easier to take the set and pronounced features of elderly persons than the comparatively unformed faces of the young, so it is with the student of character; he can, in fact, only judge with certainty of men's minds from their faces when they have passed life's meridian. By that time the habitual smile or frown has become stereotyped; greed or generosity, duplicity or frankness, and even to some extent wisdom or folly, have written their autographs upon their possessors with more or less of distinctness. Care and toil, indeed, may cause us to pass a harsh judgment; for we sometimes ascribe their work to that of moroseness; but after forty it is very difficult for any gentleman who is a scoundrel to appear like an honest man. The kind heart, too, glows through the genial countenance no

matter how coarse the grain, how weather-beaten the skin, like the light through a horn lantern.

Mrs. Wardlaw's ruddy face was the incarnation of kindness; and, though her majestic proportions forbade any approach to sprightliness, she had a dancing eye. Judged by a Mayfair standard, her appearance might have been set down as vulgar; (between ourselves, I have seen leaders of fashion quite as unfortunate in that respect, but in them it is called 'a majestic appearance'); she looked, said her enemies (for in this wicked world how could so excellent a soul be without them?) 'like a house-keeper:' but what is better than a good housekeeper, I should like to know, except indeed a good cook? It was a matter of surprise among some who had the privilege of Mrs. Conway's acquaintance how so exclusive and lady-like a being could have got to know so stout and florid a personage as Mrs. Wardlaw, who was also (and by no means distantly) 'connected with trade.'

The captain's wife had always held her head up—metaphorically—very high, and when circumstances had prevented her from continuing to move in the best circles, had kept herself to herself, and ceased to move at all. Lodgings in Gower Street (however convenient with regard to omnibuses) are not adapted for this sort of motion, and while residing in them she had therefore been stationary. Yet it was during that period, and now some years ago, that the acquaintance with Mrs. Wardlaw had been formed, not indeed by Mrs. Conway, but by Nelly herself.

Wearied with reading, and practising on the piano, the girl was amusing herself one day during the absence of her mother by looking out of the dining-room window—her pretty chin resting on the top of the blind, her little nose flattened against the pane—when an accident occurred just opposite the door. An omnibus had stopped to 'drop' a lady passenger, and not stopping long enough had dropped her in the road, from which, with an obstinacy which the conductor denounced as 'cussed,' she refused to stir. When one weighs sixteen stone, and sprains an ankle, it is difficult to put even one's best leg foremost. The stout lady was evidently helpless, and in great pain, and promised a gratuitous entertainment to the public more gratifying, because less fleeting, than Punch, or organs; but as the sudden crowd closed around her, a young girl followed by a maid-of-all-work appeared upon the scene: 'Bring the lady into our house,' cried she excitedly.

'Who's to do it, miss, without a windlass?'

'I have got a shilling,' said Nelly (of which she was quite certain, it being her whole stock of pocket-money), and she held it between her small finger and thumb. The power of the lever

is as nothing compared with that of a visible coin. Four sturdy men seized the prostrate lady and carried her like a feather into Nelly's parlour, and retired with the price of four quarts of beer among them.

'Where is it you are hurt, madam?' inquired Nelly tenderly.

'I have broken my leg, my dear; send for my doctor—Dr. Walsh, of Russell Square.'

Short as was the distance, and quickly as the doctor took to traverse it, he found the patient and her little hostess already on intimate terms.

'You have had a bad fall, but it is into good hands, I see,' said he, when he had made his examination of the ankle, round which Nelly had wrapped some wet rags.

'She is a little angel,' exclaimed Mrs. Wardlaw rapturously.

'She is a little doctor, which is almost the same thing,' answered he smiling. 'We shall get you home in half an hour.' But Mrs. Wardlaw remained on the sofa for a much longer time, awaiting Mrs. Conway's return home.

'I could not leave your roof,' she said when that lady arrived, 'without expressing my sense of the kindness with which I have been treated by your sweet little daughter. I am sure John also—that is my husband: we live in the square close by—will never rest till he has thanked you.'

'There is nothing to thank us for, madam,' replied Mrs. Conway with stiffness. Her visitor's appearance did not impress her favourably; the 'h' in the word 'husband' had not been so distinct as could be wished; the name of John had a plebeian sound; moreover, it was annoying—though quite in consonance with the unsatisfactoriness of things in general—that a person of this description should live in the square, while she, Mrs. Conway, to whom the first circles had once been open, lived in the street, and in lodgings.

Poor Mrs. Wardlaw perceived that she was snubbed.

'I take the liberty to kiss your dear little daughter,' said she, 'because I have no words to speak my gratitude to her, Mrs. Conway, and of course no other means of expressing it. If there were any such means, or if a time should ever arrive when John Wardlaw—he is in the timber trade, ma'am, at present, but is about to retire—I should know what to be about; it will be as much as I can do, I know, to keep him from stepping round and thanking her in person.'

'I am sure my Nelly has been thanked enough, Mrs. Wardlaw.'

'John will not think so, ma'am; and he is so fond of children,

though unhappily we have none of our own, and when I come to tell him of your daughter's kindness and of the good sense beyond her years——'

'Indeed, you will make her vain,' put in her hostess peremptorily; 'children are so easily spoilt.'

'And how I should like to spoil you, my darling!' exclaimed Mrs. Wardlaw, putting her arms about the child in farewell. 'No, I don't want *your* help, little one: I should break you all to pieces, if I leant upon you. Jessie's arm will do.' And so with the maid's support she hobbled to the hired brougham that had been waiting for her hours ago, as though time had not been money; and departed, leaving the aforesaid Jessie in possession of a glittering medallion, which, upon consulting with more experienced friends, she discovered to be a half-sovereign piece.

No news came from their late patient to the dwellers in Gower Street, far less any personal visit from her 'John;' and Mrs. Conway rather repented of the sharp way in which she had put a stop to any such communication; a few messages, backwards and forwards, would not have injured her own quondam position in the fashionable world; nor was it, on the whole, a wise proceeding to have thus quenched the incipient liking of their wealthy neighbour for Nelly. This last consideration, however, weighed but little with Mrs. Conway; no material reasons ever did when set in the balance against her prejudices. Moreover, though it is possible that, in a future state of existence, this lady might possibly be induced, under pressure of Rhadamanthus, to admit that on one or two occasions she had committed during her life—say—an error of judgment; as to allowing that she was wrong, there were no imaginable conditions, either of circumstance or being, under which she could have been brought to such a confession.

In all probability the relations between Mrs. Wardlaw and the Conways would have ended with that first interview, but that in a few days Nelly asked permission to make inquiry after the wounded lady at her house; nor would the intimacy have gone far perhaps even then but that the child went unaccompanied by her mother, though bearing from her a pretty gift in the shape of a posy of hothouse flowers. That Mrs. Conway should have thought of them, and given half-a-crown for them, and arranged them with her own tasteful hands, notwithstanding her previous discourtesy, was quite in keeping with her character: it was not done with the least feeling of making amends; but since the visit was to be, it was well that the obligation which had already proceeded from her side should remain there—nay, be intensified. The lady in the

square had her advantages ; and that was all the more reason why she should not have the whip-hand of the lady in the street. Unconscious of these subtle and philosophic reasons, little Nelly took her nosegay to the big house in Russell Square, where the invalid was lying, in the immensity of the back drawing-room, on a sofa which, compared with that in Gower Street, was a very Bed of Ware.

‘You look more like a good fairy than ever,’ cried Mrs. Wardlaw, which, as to size, in contrast to those spacious surroundings, she did indeed. ‘You cannot be flesh and blood, but some lovely little ornament for the mantel-piece in china.’

‘Papa’s in China,’ returned Nelly roguishly, ‘not I.’

‘And so ready too with her little tongue!’ exclaimed her hostess rapturously. ‘What a pretty nosegay! and with your ma’s compliments, is it? Well, I’m sure it’s very kind of your ma. Yes, my ankle’s better; all the better for seeing you, I do believe; you’re as welcome as the spring vi’lets. Won’t she be a pocket Venus when she’s full-grown, John?’ Nelly looked round, and saw a jolly-looking old gentleman, stouter and ruddier even than Mrs. Wardlaw, regarding her with approving eyes; he had come out of the front drawing-room, while she had been talking with his wife, and it evidenced well indeed to the deep pile of the carpet that his steps had not been heard. ‘So that’s your young friend, is it!’ said he, rattling the loose silver in his capacious pocket with one hand, and laying the other lightly upon Nelly’s head. ‘She’s a very nice little lot.’

‘Lot, indeed. A very much nicer one than you ever saw in any of your auction-rooms, I reckon,’ returned his lady, with what seemed somewhat uncalled-for severity.

‘Yes, a rare article,’ continued the old gentleman critically; ‘quite unique, I should say; late the property of—but her father’s alive, ain’t he?’

‘Of course he is; didn’t you hear the dear child say he was in China?’

‘That’s a long way off,’ observed Mr. Wardlaw gravely, as though hesitating to admit even the existence of a gentleman at so great a distance. ‘But then her mother’s in Gower Street,’ added he cheerfully; ‘that’s close enough, anyway; and there’s not a better neighbourhood for chance “finds” in London.’

If Nelly was at a loss to perceive the opportuneness of these observations of her host, she was not the first person who had been thus puzzled. Mr. Wardlaw’s weakness was attendance at sales by auction, at which he spent most of his leisure time, and most of his surplus money. *They had the same attraction for him which*

the billiard-room and the racecourse have for another class of men, though without any evil result save an infinity of bad bargains. His purchases, indeed, would have been cheap at the money, had he wanted them, but, being continuous and of a wildly miscellaneous character, his accumulations could be scarcely considered as good investments. He would buy sables enough to set up a fur shop, and which got the moth before he got a purchaser for them; or French clocks by the dozen, which remained on his hands till their year's warranty had expired, and with it their powers of motion; or claret by the hogshead, which 'only wanted keeping to be a first-class wine,' but which somehow went sour during the process. An advertisement of a great sale was an irresistible invitation to him; the roving eye of the auctioneer had a fascination for him such as that of the snake is said to exercise over his feathered prey; and the fall of the hammer was as the rattle that immediately precedes its doom.

After all, as Mrs. Wardlaw was well aware, her husband's weakness was one for which most wives would be very willing to compound, and more especially since he could afford it.

If he made a few bad bargains, there were some very good ones made for him by the house in the City wherein he was a nominal partner.

The phrase 'a nice little lot' he had applied to Nelly was a great compliment from him, and his good opinion was confirmed on further acquaintance. Nobody could say, considering how often he bid for things which were not desiderated by other people, that Mr. Wardlaw had no opinion of his own; and, once formed, he stuck to it.

And so it came about that the girl made to herself two warm and faithful friends in this honest couple.

Even Mrs. Conway was in time brought to endure them, though she never forgot her own superior position, or permitted poor Mrs. Wardlaw to forget it. As to the old gentleman, it was difficult to make him understand how his wife should be inferior to any living woman; but he was all the easier to patronise from his very obtuseness. Moreover, he won Mrs. Conway's heart by a characteristic criticism he passed upon Mr. Pennicuick, the elder, with whom he became (very distantly) acquainted through his new friends. He pronounced him to be 'rather a scratch lot,' and more likely to be 'bought in' than to awaken public competition. On the other hand, he took to Raymond Pennicuick from the first, and would have put him up to many good things at 'Garraway's' and 'Christie's,' but for his wife's veto, who looked upon those *respectable establishments* as haunts of temptation to which no

young man should be exposed. As time rolled on, so did Mr. Wardlaw's wealth—increasing like a snow-ball, till at length it enabled him to retire from business, when he took a country-house at Richmond, a fact which had formed a very strong inducement to the Conways to pitch their tent in the same locality. Both families were new-comers, but the latter was the later arrival, which had permitted Mrs. Wardlaw to pay the first call upon Mrs. Conway; if their positions had been reversed, that lady would have probably taken advantage of it to delay her visit in order to make it evident that she was not dependent upon the other's acquaintance, or in any way 'eaten up with those Wardlaws.' Notwithstanding all which rubbish, the two elder ladies had a sincere regard for one another, not to mention the common bond of affection which Nelly formed between them.

The present occasion was only the second visit which Mrs. Wardlaw had paid Mrs. Conway and her daughter since they had been installed in their new home, but she had been obliged to wait for Mrs. Conway's return call, and had replied to it on the very next day.

'Why, how is it you have not come in your carriage?' inquired that lady condescendingly. 'Nelly and I were quite looking forward to seeing you come in "state."'

'Well, the fact was, it seemed too ridiculous, Mrs. Conway, considering what a short distance I had to come; and I want to get used to the thing—which I can't do just yet—before I call on you. It is very kind of John, of course, to give me such a fine coach and horses, not to mention the coachman (who has got a wig, my dear Nelly, made I believe of spun silk), but at present I don't feel much to enjoy them. Thursday—that was the first day—was a great trial to me, dear Mrs. Conway.'

'A trial? Why a trial, Mrs. Wardlaw?' inquired the other sweetly; though knowing perfectly well to what her friend was alluding.

'Well, I dare say to you who have been brought up among carriage-people, and are used to all their ways, it would have been nothing; but it was not only that the thing was strange to me, but everybody about me *knew* that it was strange. I felt all of a twitter at the grandeur and novelty of it, but still more so because Jane and Susan, who had lived with a mistress without a carriage all these days, must have known I was in a twitter. When Charles (that's the new footman) came into the room with his "Ma'am, the carriage is at the door," it was something so dreadful that I had almost a mind to say, "Then send it away again." What I did say, however, was "Very good," with a quiet wave of

the hand that I had practised in my own apartment before the pier-glass. I knew that Jane and Susan would be looking out of window at the new carriage, but I was not prepared for what I did see, over the dining-room blind, which was nothing less than Charles himself performing a dance like a wild Indian before the two girls in the area, to express his sense of enjoyment of the whole proceeding. The coachman sat immovable except for a slight wobble which pervaded his frame and extended to his wig. When I appeared at the front door you might have taken them both for graven images; and I hope I looked grave and dignified myself. Only unhappily, in my hurry and nervousness, and also because of my fine train (which is longer than the long clothes I wore as a baby), I put my foot in my gown as I stepped into the carriage, and fell flat on the floor of it.'

For Nelly this narrative had nothing but amusement, but Mrs. Conway received it austere: she did not like jokes upon any subject; and felt it deplorable that a person unaccustomed to keeping a carriage should find in her own incompetence to assume the ways of 'society' a theme for mirth.

'You will become used to your new position in time, no doubt,' said she; 'but in the mean while you must be careful to maintain your dignity before your servants.'

'But it is so difficult to do that upon all-fours,' pleaded the good lady, still shaking with laughter at the recollection of her late catastrophe; 'and after all, when one does meet with misfortunes, the best plan, I do believe, is to laugh at them.'

'Indeed!' said Mrs. Conway, who had never tried that plan. 'You must have been exceptionally fortunate, I think, to have been able to do so.'

'Well, yes; I have no reason to complain,' assented Mrs. Wardlaw simply. 'Though sometimes John is very trying. What do you think he did only yesterday, for example? He brought down to be stored away in our new house—which, if somewhat larger than we need, is certainly not meant for a dry-goods store—a gross of tambourines.'

'Of tambourines!' echoed Nelly, laughing. 'Is Uncle John' [she used to call him uncle as a child, notwithstanding some opposition upon the part of her mamma, and still continued so to do because she knew that to drop the assumed relationship would pain him] 'going to learn that instrument?'

'Of course not, my dear; and if he was, he could not practise on one hundred and forty-four at once. He has bought them because he says they were an excellent bargain. Now, what *would*

you do, Mrs. Conway, if your husband were to bring *you* home twelve dozen of tambourines ?'

'I should burn them; but he would never venture,' added the other haughtily, 'to commit such an act of folly.'

'Well, of course it is foolish of John; but then, on the other hand, he is no sort of trouble to me as some husbands are; he never interferes with matters of the house, and though he worries me sometimes with his insisting on my doing this and that—on my having this carriage, for instance, which I didn't want, and which will only make me fatter, yet I know it was meant in nothing but kindness, and to save my old legs.'

Mrs. Conway shrugged her shoulders; the expression, 'to save my old legs,' was very distasteful to her; a woman who could use it was certainly unworthy of a carriage.

'Dear Uncle John!' said Nelly softly, 'he is always thinking how to please people.'

'Yes, my dear, he is not clever, but he is kind. I only hope you will have as good a husband. He is never away from home; we have not been separated for twenty-four hours since we married. Of course,' added Mrs. Wardlaw, with precipitation, for she saw the wrinkles deepening on the forehead of her hostess, 'that is impossible in many cases. Your own dear papa, for instance, is obliged to be away, but that is for your sakes.'

Mrs. Conway smiled bitterly. Poor Mrs. Wardlaw grew redder and redder, and so very warm that the colour came out of her bright blue gloves. Only one means of conciliation presented itself. She disliked to speak ill of anybody, but to abuse Mr. Pennicuick was always a sure way to Mrs. Conway's favour: so she resolved to sacrifice that gentleman upon the altar of friendship.

'What I meant to say against men leaving their homes and families was when they do so of their own free wills, from love of travel as they call it, but which is often only a cloak for selfishness. What a mistake it is, for example, in that Mr. Pennicuick to leave his son, and his country, and his parish church, to go gadding about in foreign parts!'

'I cannot say that I agree with you, Mrs. Wardlaw,' observed Mrs. Conway coldly. 'I think Mr. Pennicuick is quite right. The mistake he makes—and which those like him make who separate themselves from their own flesh and blood, to live abroad—is this, that they ever trouble themselves to come home again.'

'Oh dear!' murmured Mrs. Wardlaw under her breath. She felt as though she had broken some priceless article which could not be replaced, and for which mischance no apology could be made.

‘Do you know, Nelly, I think it’s going to rain; so I had better get home while I can.’

She rose and made her adieux to her hostess, who received them with frigidity. Nelly accompanied her to the hall door.

‘My dear child,’ whispered the departing visitor, ‘I am afraid I have put your mamma out. What could I have said that set her off so? Can it possibly have been the tambourines? Perhaps your dear papa used to play upon them.’

‘No, no; mamma is not very well to-day: that is all.’

‘But that would never make her say that he needn’t trouble himself to return home.’

‘Hush, hush: she didn’t mean it.’

‘Of course not; but even to say it, with your poor dear papa all among those pigtailed savages! why, if anything was to happen to him, she would never forgive herself—I’ve not upset *you*, darling, I do hope. I can see there’s *something* the matter.’

‘No, no. I shall be better presently. Good-bye, dear Mrs. Wardlaw, and love to Uncle John.’

It was not often that Nelly Conway ‘broke down;’ but that afternoon had been a very trying one to her. She had been more moved by Raymond’s proposal than she had owned even to herself; the necessity of rejecting it had disheartened her, and made her strangely subject to depressing influences. That allusion of Mrs. Wardlaw’s to her father—the very echo of the sentiment she had herself expressed but a few minutes before—filled her with a vague sense of foreboding; how dreadful it would be if ‘anything was to happen to him,’ and she were never to see the loving face which she had pictured to herself so often, partly from memory, partly from the personal description which he had penned to her half in jest! She knew this was weakness, but she was just now too weak to battle against it. It was her wont, when her mother was irritable or in low spirits, to do her best to comfort her, but on this occasion she shrank from the dutiful task. There were two topics—Raymond and her father—which for the time were too painful to her to be discoursed upon; and they were the very ones that her mother would probably select.

She passed by the parlour door, and went up into her own room: not ‘to have a good cry,’ as is the way with some girls, but to think matters out, and if possible compose her mind. She did think of many things both sad and strange. But the wild, wandering, audacious thought itself sometimes falls short of the reality; and so it was with Nelly Conway as she dwelt anxiously upon her father’s and her lover’s future, or dreamily forecast her own.

CHAPTER X.

CHINESE JUSTICE.

THERE is but one step, it is often said, between the Sublime and the Ridiculous: a downward one, and taken very quickly; but the shock is far greater when the step is taken the other way, and we stumble *up* from the Ridiculous to the Sublime. I remember a masked ball, in a certain place, where men and women were grinning and jigging together, without a serious thought among them, when suddenly above the brazen roar of the band there rose a shrill terrified shriek of 'Fire!' What happened on the occasion in question need not be here narrated; but it was dwelt upon by the annalists of the day as transcending all that has been written of the cowardice of human nature. Had they been there themselves, perhaps they would have helped to illustrate it. It was a spectacle, at all events, calculated to inspire pity as well as contempt. To be brought face to face with Death without warning is awful even to the wretched; but to meet him at a harlequinade, with our cap and bells on, is an ordeal terrible to the bravest.

It was something of this nature that had happened to Ralph Pennicwick, when he found himself felled and bound in the hands of the despised Chinese. He had conceived so intense a disdain for them, he had been accustomed to regard them so entirely as disagreeable children, that even his dislike of them had been mitigated by their insignificance; and now, in a moment, all his views were changed. The very ridicule he had expended on them seemed to have been paid back to him again; he could not understand how he had ever entertained it; his heart had room for nothing in regard to them save rage, and hate, and horror. For though his courage, or his pride, forbade him to give the least sign of fear, he was as well aware as Conway himself that he was doomed to death. It was surprising that so sagacious a man, and one in general so careful of his own well-being, should have given way to a temptation that would only have been attractive, as one would think, to a midshipman or a schoolboy, and the consequences of succumbing to which were obviously so tremendous. It was, however, his very love of self, which never permitted him to deny it a gratification, however fleeting, combined with what in a younger man would have been the love of mischief, but was in him a malicious impulse, that had induced him to steal the Shay-le. The sudden impulse to deprive thousands of ignorant devotees, and scores of lying priests, of the most precious and

most ancient relic their temple possessed, had seized upon him while the Chief-priest's attention was engaged in exhibiting some other sacred object, and it had proved too strong to be resisted. When he had done it, his repentance had been as rapid as his crime; he had perceived the extreme danger of his position, and would perhaps willingly have withdrawn from it had retreat been possible. On the other hand, the Shay-le would not be inquired for again till the next feast-day, which he understood would not occur for several weeks, and by that time he would be safe enough among his fellow-countrymen. And with what pride and pleasure would he exhibit this concentration of Chinese sanctity, this crystallised essence of Buddha himself, to admiring friends! If he had not made a reputation for himself already for audacity and coolness, the possession of this relic and the story of its capture would have secured one. At first, as I have said, he had had his doubts, which had given his manner that constraint which his friend had observed: but, before he reached the boat, the matter had thoroughly recommended itself to him. When Conway informed him that the priest had indirectly deceived him, and that the morrow was another feast-day on which the Shay-le would probably be again exhibited, his mind once more misgave him. For it was plain that the loss of the relic would be at once discovered, and on whom was suspicion so likely to fall as upon himself? He even took it from its hiding-place, as we have seen, with the half-intention of dropping it into the river, and so getting rid of all evidence against him; but the thing had shone so, that it struck him it might be really a precious stone; and he was a man to whom gems were gems, and money money. Moreover, pride came to his ruin. He had got possession of this blessed 'curio,' and he was not going to part with it, come what would. A resolve once taken with him became adamant. It was clear that the sooner they left the neighbourhood of the temple the better; yet just because Conway had unconsciously observed, 'You seem in a hurry to get away,' Pennicuick had obstinately denied it; nay, even though, as has been seen, he had a suspicion that he had been watched by Fu-chow, so strong that if the Chinese captain had given a sign of wakefulness that night, he would have shot him dead, he had not been deterred from his purpose to retain his prize. The thought that any harm might arise to his companion out of his own recklessness did not enter into his mind; but it would have been all the same if it had; for if Ralph Pennicuick was not deterred from a course of action by a consideration of the consequences to himself, it is certain that he would not be so from any fear of what might happen to other

people. Hard, insolent, selfish as he was, however, even the sternest moralist might have felt pity for him now. A few days at furthest, to be spent in a noisome prison and to be ended by a lingering death of unimaginable pain, were all that would probably remain to him of life. In the contemplation of which, a better man might be forgiven if all thought of 'and after death the judgment' was overwhelmed and lost.

And yet, all hopeless and helpless as Pennicuick was, not a muscle quivered, nor did the steadiness of his keen eyes abate one jot, as he looked round about him upon his keen-eyed foes. The Chinese, some say, are not cruel; but this only means that they do not take the same active delight in cruelty as some more savage communities; they are totally insensible to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures. They knew that the Englishman was about to undergo one of the most horrible punishments even in their horrible code; but that did not cause them to regard him with any special interest. One of their own countrymen would have failed to arouse it under similar circumstances, and far less this barbarian. What made their almond eyes so bright and wondering as they gazed upon their captive was the immensity of his crime. They could not understand what Buddha could have been about to have permitted so great an impiety as the abstraction of a portion of his own anatomy, without some signal and immediate revelation of his wrath. Here was the man alive and unscathed who had stolen the sacred Shay-le, and carried it round his neck as a girl her beads; and there was the precious relic itself, on an open plate upon the altar, twinkling in a subdued manner (by reason of the paper windows) as though the sacrilege that had disturbed its ten thousand years of venerable seclusion was rather a joke than otherwise. Anger and pity were equally absent from the flat smooth faces that surrounded the prostrate prisoner, with one exception. The countenance of Fu-chow, in general not more significant than that of most of his countrymen, expressed quiet malice—an unsatisfied grudge. As Pennicuick's gaze rested upon it, he knew—quite as surely as if the man had told him—that it was to him that he was indebted for this catastrophe: that he had tried to leave the boat that morning to give information of the sacrilege, and failing in that attempt had sent one of his men to do so. This did not arouse in him any remembrance of his own conduct; of the insult he had put on the man's daughter, or of his threats and harshness to the man himself, which had hourly kept alive and ministered to his rancour; but it filled him with a yearning never to be satisfied, and like the craving of a strong man for food or drink, to be

allowed one minute—only one—with his arms free, or even his hands, and that smooth traitor's neck within reach of them.

Fu-chow, who read this desire in his eyes quite plainly, moved softly across the room, and stooping down, with quite a winning smile, whispered something in his ear. 'I understood you, my friend, quite well,' returned Pennicuick quietly, 'though I am unacquainted with your charming language.' But he put the word that had been whispered into a pigeon-hole of his mind, that he might presently obtain its interpretation.

The next moment he was picked up by four soldiers, and carried, as though he were already dead, into a neighbouring chamber. This was what in an English country gentleman's house, who is a magistrate, would have been termed the justice-room, where poachers undergo preliminary examination (in which they are by no means cautioned not to criminate themselves), and the parentage of village love-children is humorously investigated; in China, where everything is as magnificent as sound can make it, it was the Hall of Audience, where the proceedings are conducted in accordance with the dignity of its title.

At a high broad desk set out with writing materials, the mandarin had already taken his seat, with secretaries, clerks, and even an interpreter (who did not understand English) in attendance; and two lictors with whips—used not as formal instruments of punishment, but merely in a casual way to clear the road for his Eminence, when he moved in his sedan abroad. On the desk was Twang-hi's official seal, and a cup containing tallies, to be thrown down on the ground to indicate how many stripes with the universal bamboo he considered to be adapted for any culprit brought before him. The bamboo stood up against the wall, along with a board with two round grooves for compressing the ankles, in order to expedite confession, and five round sticks arranged to squeeze the fingers with the like object. Above these instruments of persuasion hung several inscriptions, like the Scripture texts in the bedrooms of some professing Christians (and with about as much practical effect), recommending the exercise of mercy.

Despite these formal shows, and not a little tawdry ornamentation, the room was as dirty as a police-court in a low neighbourhood. There was of course no counsel on either side; none such are in any case permitted to appear; nor are the witnesses even sworn—a precaution the less necessary since no oath has up to this date been discovered which is binding upon the Chinese conscience; indeed, if among the wise sayings of Confucius the phrase 'first catch your conscience' does not appear, his system of morality as

regards the Celestial race is singularly deficient and unelemental. Moreover, the witnesses are not bound to appear against the prisoner during any subsequent proceedings. It cannot be urged against the Chinese code that these most necessary and innocent persons are kept hanging about in draughty courts, as under our own system, not knowing when they will be called upon, and uncertain of everything except that they are the only persons in the case who are being put to inconvenience without remuneration. In China, to prevent all this, and especially to insure their attendance, witnesses, prosecutor, and prisoner, are all committed to gaol together in readiness for the assizes.

In the present case there was but one witness pure and simple, a Buddhist priest, who had seen the two Englishmen go up towards the pagoda where the Shay-le was kept; for Fu-chow, although his revelation of what he had seen in the cabin would prove fatal enough, even if the relic had not been found upon the prisoner's person, assumed to himself the position of prosecutor. His glibness in his own tongue was surprising; and as he had taken the precaution to preface his observations with the statement that his father was a mandarin, the great Twang-hi condescended to attend to them; otherwise (and this is a plan which we might borrow with great advantage), when witnesses are tedious or even too florid in their testimony, the bamboo is applied to *them*, to compel terseness.

Conway listened with all his ears; but his scanty knowledge of the Chinese tongue placed him in much the same position as that of a gentleman learning short-hand who endeavours to set down the words of a fluent speaker; before he had thoroughly mastered the meaning of the first sentence, the orator was three sentences ahead of him. He could only gather vaguely that Fu-chow was extolling his father, whose dignity and position he described as only inferior to that of Twang-hi himself; and that he then proceeded to describe his own devotion to the principles of morality and religion, which had caused him to watch with caution (or in other words to play the spy upon) this barbarian blasphemer, whose cup of enormities, long filled to the brim, had at last been made to run over by this unparalleled act of sacrilege. He also observed that the references to himself were exculpatory and even favourable, which afforded him some comfort upon his friend's account as well as upon his own, since, had he also been included in the accusation, he would have been powerless indeed to give him aid.

What he missed the sense of, and which was likely to escape him from its original view of the matter, was the two pictures

drawn of him and Pennicwick by the Chinese captain and contrasted with one another. He himself was described as a military personage of distinction, revered by his fellow-countrymen, and even respected, as was proved by his letter of introduction, by Chinese officials at Shanghai of such rank as to enjoy the personal acquaintance of Twang-hi himself. He was guileless, pious, and passionately attached to the memory of his parents: whereas this Pennicwick, on the other hand, was a mere hanger-on of society, unknown to persons of respectability, and one whom he (Fu-chow), albeit imperfectly acquainted with the barbarian language, had with his own ears heard speak disrespectfully of mandarins, of their buttons, their peacock's feathers, and in short of every institution calculated to arouse reverence and respect in the mind of man. That the prisoner was wicked and dangerous, in fact, had been long abundantly clear to him, though the crime of which he now stood committed did, Fu-chow confessed, transcend everything of which he had suspected him to be capable.

To all this impassioned eloquence Twang-hi listened with a sublime gravity, not to be emulated by flesh and blood; indeed, he looked more like the mandarins we see in England, not constructed of those fleeting materials, who stand at the doors of tea-shops, and point rigidly to the legends in the window concerning the prices of Congou or Hyson. Only at intervals he would slowly and solemnly incline his head, so much after the manner of an automaton chess-player that Conway almost expected to hear the click in the machinery as he did so. Presently, however, cutting Fu-chow's eloquence not short indeed, but very abruptly, he signed to his two lictors, and in a moment Pennicwick was on his knees in front of the desk with these two personages on either side of him, and apparently hanging on to him by his ears. They were not hurting him at present, but were prepared to twist them at a moment's notice in case the culprit proved refractory in the matter of confession, or generally failed to gratify expectation. Conway also noticed for the first time that there was a neat plot of flint-stones on the floor, to which a kneeling prisoner might be removed, by no means to his convenience, if he showed any tardiness of speech.

'Let the culprit say what he has got to say for himself,' observed the mandarin; 'and do you, sir' (this with a courteous inclination of his head to Conway), 'interpret it to us in the interests of justice.'

'He calls upon you, Pennicwick, for your defence,' said Conway hurriedly. 'Tell him you were ignorant of the gravity of your crime; that you are exceedingly sorry; and above all that you have lots of money wherewith to make expiation to the

temple for the wrong committed, and—especially—to recompense his Excellency for the trouble you have caused him.'

'I will see him damned first, Connie,' was the fierce reply. 'The revolver is lying on the right-hand side of his desk beneath those papers. I will give you a thousand pounds——'

'You are throwing away your life, Pennicuick,' interrupted Conway, 'by every moment of silence, and the least show of resistance would throw away mine. I adjure you to say something conciliatory, and above all to offer as huge a bribe as it is in your power to pay without application to Shanghai.'

'I am not to be frightened, Conway, by this juggler's threats. And I will not submit to extortion,' answered Pennicuick sternly. 'Tell him I am underneath the protection of the British flag, and woe betide him——'

Twang-hi lifted up his hand for silence, and at the same moment something happened to the speaker's ears which somehow compelled obedience. The agony was so excessive that it might have extorted a shriek from the strongest man, but not a sound broke from the prisoner's lips. His friend, attracted by the mandarin's eye, did not even know what had taken place, nor did the stubborn pride of Pennicuick permit him to reveal the humiliation he had suffered.

'My friend wishes to say, your Excellency,' said Conway, very slowly, not only that he might be understood, but to give himself time to manufacture suitable arguments, 'that he is overwhelmed with horror and penitence, on account of the outrage he has committed. He had no idea of the sacredness of the Shay-le, or of the value set upon it by so many religious persons. He is prepared to pay to the utmost of his power in atonement for the foolish frolic (as he thought it) of which he has been guilty. If any offering to the temple, or endowment for the priests'—a look of such intense negation came into the mandarin's face, that Conway would have left that line, and glided off to another branch at once, even without the words that accompanied it.

'Is it conceivable,' interrupted Twang-hi, pointing to Pennicuick, 'that this wretch imagines that Buddha needs his dirty money, or that his priests would accept in his cursed name, as expiation for so infamous a sacrilege, any pecuniary recompense whatever? If it was possible to enhance such unparalleled wickedness as he has committed, he has done so by this proposal.'

Here the audience all raised their hands in admiration of his Excellency's noble sentiments, with the exception of the Buddhist priest himself, who looked morose and disappointed. Like a High Church rector who has been decorating his chancel, he was thinking

of restorations, and how conveniently a little heretical money would have come in just then.

'There is no reason, O Twang-hi,' said he, 'why this unhappy reprobate should not do something in the way of repairs to our holy temple, before expiating in torments that fall far short of his deserts his abominable crime. In the Fire-lake that awaits him hereafter it may be some consolation to his wretched soul that he has contributed to so pious a work.'

'What the deuce are they jabbering about, Connie?' inquired Pennicuick fretfully. 'I have five hundred pounds or so on board the boat; and if you will not let me have a shot at them, I suppose there is nothing for it but to pay.' His ears were still in pain, and the friction of his knees against the flint-strewn floor was getting intolerable.

'My friend has made me a communication, your Excellency,' said Conway gravely, 'which is of great importance, but must be addressed to your private ear.'

'In the Hall of Audience there are no secrets,' returned the mandarin austere; 'the works of justice must be seen of men. Nevertheless, that the whole truth of the matter should be known, approach and speak.'

Then ensued the scene which is so often witnessed in our Courts of Chancery, when a married woman is admitted, in sight of all, to converse with the Lord Chancellor on the bench of justice; their whispers having reference (as is charitably understood) solely to the disposal of her property without dictation from her husband.

'That my friend has committed a great crime, Twang-hi, is true, though it was done in ignorance and error; but penetrated as he is with a sense of its enormity, it almost equally distresses him to have put your Excellency to so much trouble and inconvenience. "How shall I recompense this wise and merciful functionary," is the question that now agitates his bosom, "for the attention which he has bestowed upon this affair?" I adjure your Excellency to condescend to accept two hundred pounds of English money.'

If the countenance of Twang-hi could have been capable of expressing a greater gravity and sense of official responsibility than it did already, it expressed it now, as he solemnly looked round the court.

'You are a good man,' he whispered in a low tone, 'and your feelings do you honour. I will take the two hundred pounds of English money.'

'And your prisoner will go free?'

'Nay. I have not the power to set him at liberty. The offence he has committed is far too grave. His sentence will be pronounced by the governor of the province, and will without doubt be such as is awarded to all who commit sacrilege. The Emperor himself could not save him from the post and the knife.'

'You will at all events permit me to communicate with his friends at Shanghai?'

'By no means,' answered the mandarin coolly. 'It would cost me my position, and perhaps my head. It has been proclaimed that there is to be no more truckling to barbarians. Your friend there is as good as dead already.'

'If this be so, what advantage will he derive from the little present of which I have already spoken?'

'He will be spared the great distress of seeing his innocent friend thrown into prison with himself, in a few days to suffer the same condign punishment. You will have access to him while in gaol, and may even enjoy the melancholy pleasure of witnessing his execution. Then you shall depart in peace, and tell your fellow-countrymen all that has happened, in one of their so admirable newspapers.'

'But this man is not only a person of wealth, Twang-hi, but of much importance. His death will be avenged by the men of his own nation; and not only you, and everyone who has had a hand in it, but the country at large, will be held responsible.'

'I have said you were a good man,' observed Twang-hi coldly; 'but you will not permit me to add, a wise one. The argument you advance, if it were of real importance, would recommend that you should both be killed, since dead men do not make a fuss about their fate. But, in fact, it is quite worthless. If a native of this country goes to England, and commits a crime, he is punished by the law of the land. You do not say to yourselves, What will the Celestials think about it? Perhaps the idea of the anger of the Emperor, the Son of Heaven, has but little effect upon you. What is sauce for the duck, says Confucius, is sauce for the drake. Moreover, even supposing there should be a national disturbance about this fellow, Dhulang, here, my private residence is a long way up the country, and, to speak freely, I should not care one cash about the matter. On the other hand, I should risk my head by omitting to send the case before the governor, and I value my head at a considerably higher figure than two hundred pounds of English money. Nevertheless, for that sum I will make things as comfortable as I can, having heard a satisfactory report of you from Fu-chow (who is the nephew of a friend of mine), and also because I believe you to be a good man. If things had been less agreeably managed, your friend

would have had his ankles squeezed for him, and his fingers pinched, perhaps, not to mention the bamboo. "What we have escaped," says Confucius, "may well be reckoned as gain."

'How long, Twang-hi, will the messenger whom you send to the governor of the province take to go and return?'

'About eight-and-forty hours.'

'And if the sentence should be'—Conway was a brave man, but a certain creeping of the flesh here seized him—"should be," he continued, 'as you apprehend, when will it be executed?'

'It must be put into effect at once. I shall have no choice in the matter, but be personally responsible for the least delay. The affair is not in my hands, but in those of Imperial justice. I conclude you have the money you spoke of in the boat?'

'Your Excellency shall have it at once,' said Conway gravely. 'In the mean time I have your solemn promise that I shall have unrestrained communication with my friend, and that he will be treated with kindness?'

'As to that, dear sir,' replied Twang-hi, with blandness, 'he will have to make his own arrangements. I can only see that no wrong is done here in my own court; "men's consciences are in their own private keeping," says Confucius, and I have heard, unofficially, that our gaoler makes his little perquisites. I am thus frank with you because I wish you well, and believe you to be a good man.'

Then Twang-hi arose, and, in the name of the Emperor, the Son of Heaven, announced that he, for his part, washed his hands of the barbarian blasphemer, and left him to be dealt with by the mercy of the governor of the province.

This phrase, as Conway was well aware, corresponds in China with the euphonious terms in which heretics were wont to be recommended to the attentions of the Holy Office, and is always fatal to the prospects of a prisoner.

At the same time Ralph Pennicuck was twitched up by the arms from his kneeling posture, and, followed by two soldiers with drawn swords, the points of which almost touched his retreating figure, was hurried from the room. Conway would have hastened after him, but the master of the ceremonies interposed.

'It is the desire of Twang-hi,' said he, with great politeness, 'that an immediate opportunity should be afforded you of returning to your boat, and making the arrangements about which you expressed anxiety.'

Conway would have remonstrated, but the mandarin had disappeared, nor was even Fu-chow to be seen, being, in fact, in his character of prosecutor, already on his way to prison. For the rest, the malignity that was expressed upon the countenances of

all, especially on that of the scowling priest, evidenced the futility of any appeal. There was nothing for it but to accompany the major-domo to the boat.

‘His Excellency, your master, has given orders, I presume, that after I have made my compliments’—as delicate a phrase as he could think of for greasing the hands of justice—‘I shall be at liberty to visit my friend?’

‘Except the words of wisdom which have just fallen from his mouth, like the pure and sparkling drops of yonder fountain,’ said the major-domo serenely, ‘his Excellency has kept silence.’

This gentleman, as is always the case with persons in his position in China, was devoted to literature; he had a very pretty turn for poetic imagery, and a talent for iteration from the classics, and would, under less auspicious circumstances, and in a barbarian clime such as our own, have probably been an art-critic.

‘Do you mean to say that the word of Twang-hi is as your mock money?’ inquired Conway, his patience, which was considerable, on the brink of giving way, notwithstanding his familiarity with the national methods of procedure.

‘Speak not disrespectfully of that which is burnt before the gods,’ answered the other reprovingly. ‘Twang-hi wishes you well. But his hands are washed of you. It is henceforth the pride and pleasure of Kushan to take charge of your esteemed interests. You will be kept under guard on board the boat until your friend has met with the fate awarded to him, unless any solid reason should chance, by the will of Heaven, to be advanced to the contrary.’

‘Would a “tael,”¹ O Kushan, be a solid reason?’

‘A tael is what is given to-day upon the Sacred Hill to every beggar,’ observed the major-domo abstractedly.

‘Then a sycee—let us say of five taels—is at your service.’

‘There is no weight in it,’ replied the other, holding out his finger as if balancing a feather; ‘it would almost float in the air. When one has ten taels in the hand, then indeed we say, “Ah, there is something!”’

‘When I behold the face of my friend again, O Kushan, thou shalt have ten taels.’

‘Good. Human joys are but as the skippings of a sparrow, yet the face of a friend is a sweet spectacle. “Sunder not man from his brother,” says the Best and Wisest. I will myself accompany you to the gaol when the business that we have on hand is concluded.’

¹ Something over an ounce of silver, or a little more than a dollar in value.

Kushan was not only literary but (which is rare in persons of that class) a man of business. He accompanied Conway to the cabin, and assured himself of the value of the notes and bullion which the latter paid over to him for the mandarin on behalf of his friend.

'These will go to Shanghai at once to be realised, I suppose,' observed Conway.

Kushan nodded. 'Delay is deprecated by the Wise,' he said.

'And for how many taels could a letter be taken with them by a sure and private hand?'

'It is hopeless,' answered the philosopher, with a sigh of unmistakable regret. 'To do business, and at the same time to benefit humanity, is an opportunity that rarely offers itself. That gentleman yonder,' he pointed towards the court, indicating Pennicnick, 'will be dead before your messenger could go two days' journey; and those who sent him would smart for it. You will say that you meant nothing, that you only intended to send a messenger to your wife to say the weather is beautiful. But you should not pull up your stockings in a melon field; people always think you are stealing.'

'My friend is very rich, Kushan,' pleaded Conway earnestly. 'If time were given me, I could make it worth the while even of the lord of the province to take a merciful view of the case.'

'You could not buy his head, and that is what he would lose by such a course,' returned the other coolly. 'You think I paint a snake and add legs. On the contrary, I understate the matter. No human power can save the man; and it is not likely, under the circumstances'—here a quiet smile crossed the grave face of the speaker—'that Buddha will interfere in his favour.'

'Then what advantage, in Heaven's name, do we gain by all this expenditure?'

'For yourself, immunity and escape; for your friend—well, when one is on his death-bed there is sometimes mitigation from pain. A fish may sport in the kettle though his life will not be long. By the by, I conclude that he has money in his pocket.'

'In his pocket? No; I think not.'

'What, has he gone to gaol without money? That is like going to sea without sails; he will not get on at all.'

'But they will not venture to ill-treat him in spite of the mandarin's orders to the contrary?'

'I am afraid it is possible that, by this time, the honourable person about whom we are discoursing may have been made exceedingly uncomfortable.'

The face of Kushan expressed so much more even than his

words that Conway did not lose a moment in providing himself with funds, and starting with the major-domo for the prison.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRISONER'S HOPE.

THE Chinese themselves, who ought to be the best authorities upon the matter, indicate their gaols by the same name as that which they give to the infernal regions. When a man has been committed to prison, they say, 'He is gone to ——,' the short for Gehenna, concerning which locality their views are identical with those entertained by our own theologians. These places of durance are built for the accommodation of prisoners only; and as witnesses and prosecutors are sent thither as well as the accused, the consequence is over-crowding. The inmates also suffer another sort of squeezing at the hands of the officials. The gaolers receive from Government a mere pittance, and make up their income by perquisites, which are wrung from those who are so unfortunate as to fall into their hands.

Conway and Pennicuick had both beheld with their own eyes the condition of these miserable beings, during a visit which curiosity had led them to take to a certain prison on their road, and they had been each impressed in their several ways. 'It is a nice world,' was Pennicuick's observation. 'Thousands of persons in it, mostly innocent, are suffering slow tortures in these places day and night. What has become of all the principles of eternal justice, and so forth?' It would be unjust to say that he felt no pity; but there had nevertheless been something satisfactory to his feelings in this corroborative testimony (as he considered it) to the non-existence of a Supreme Benevolence.

Conway had kept silence; for unhappy persons, when not base enough to derive pleasure from the greater misery of their fellows, are rendered by the contemplation of it still more depressed.

'Your view of the case,' Pennicuick had continued, in his bitter way, 'is that matters are redressed hereafter. You allow that such a state of things as we have just been witnessing would be a reproach to any government calling itself divine, except for the doctrine of compensation. All these poor tortured friendless beings are to go to heaven. Yet, I suppose, their being in prison, even in China, does not argue that they are more virtuous than the rest of their lying, thieving fellow-countrymen who happen to be at large. Why *should* they therefore go to heaven? and if not, why *should* they be thus oppressed on earth?'

'I am not the Creator, Pennicuick.'

‘You are His apologist; and I ask you if this is justice, and (especially) mercy?’

‘I reply, in the words of Scripture, that He is in Heaven, and we are on earth; and that, being equally ignorant of the riddle of human fate and destiny, it is no use asking questions of one another about it.’

‘Well, it is something that you don’t fold your hands, Connie, and, looking smug and submissive, observe that whatever is right. Let us light our cigars, and forget all about it.’

Conway had not forgotten all about these unimaginable horrors of which he had been a witness, but their impression had grown faint and vague upon the retina of his mind, just as happens to all of us—except some Mrs. Fry (who is one in a million)—when we have visited any scene of misfortune, such as a workhouse, or a lunatic asylum, in which, nevertheless, many thousands of our fellows continue to live on.

When now, in company with the dignified Kushan, he reached the gate of the gaol, it was with no greater apprehension concerning the present position of his friend than that his own absence might have distressed him, since he would not know how long they might be kept apart. His mind, too, was monopolised by the ultimate fate of Pennicwick, which, he was only too sure, was sealed, and which it was become, he thought, his painful duty to break to him.

Although, as we have said, the man was not very dear to him as a friend, his unhappy position seemed to heget a dearness, or rather, perhaps, to revive all those feelings of regard he had once entertained for him in youth. The memory of their old college days together welled up from his still kindly heart into his eyes, as he thought of this man and the bitter end that awaited him. What an end it was for so masterful and proud a spirit! If his sentence had been death—mere death—that would have been sad enough; but no soldier would have looked down the muzzle of the guns that were to kill him more firmly, he was well aware, than would Ralph Pennicwick. But that he should be bound to a post, and hacked to pieces by savage hands—faugh! His soul sickened at the contemplation of it. It seemed too hideous and terrible a thing to happen. And yet it was certain to happen.

They were standing before a long low building of but two stories high—or rather of one story and a half, for the basement was half sunk, and only showed the tops of certain barred windows without panes, through which, even to where they stood, came a sickly effluvium that seemed to poison the spring air.

‘Why do they not open the gate, Kushan? They have both heard and seen us,’

'That is the very reason,' answered the other quietly. 'They are making preparations for your honourable visit. Here is the governor of the prison himself, who, in general, only receives in person those who have committed murder.'

The individual whose appearance had suggested this doubtful compliment was a tall athletic man, attired in a loose grey gown, and very little else, his legs being bare, and even his arm sleeves rolled up to the elbow, but wearing a button on his cap denoting the sixth degree of rank, an unusually high one for a person of his calling. He was a little under middle age—not old enough in fact to wear a beard, a privilege which is not awarded in China to young men—but without that hirsute appendage he looked truculent and forbidding enough. His small eyes, in particular, were cruel as well as cunning, and his voice had a harsh strident ring, in strong contrast to the mellifluous accents of the major-domo.

'This is not the day for visits,' said he to Conway. 'You cannot be admitted without an order from the mandarin.'

Conway put his hand in his pocket and pulled out two taels of silver. The major-domo looked up at the sky, as if in admiration of that work of nature; the governor of the gaol (which stood in the open country) turned his eyes towards the distant mountains, at the same time holding out his hand, hollowed for the reception of the expected bribe. The whole scene reminded one of a borough election as it used to be in England.

'You wish to see your friend, I suppose; it is contrary to rule, but perhaps I may effect it.'

'The general interests of humanity,' observed Kushan, 'should overbear particular enactments, and lenity should be practised where it does not encourage crime.'

The chief gaoler nodded approval of these noble sentiments.

'The Englishman has been made comfortable, and placed in a room by himself,' said he; 'but such advantages are rare.'

'He who gives him comfort will be well rewarded,' said Conway. 'My friend here will tell you that I have the means of paying for every privilege that is granted to him.'

'You should have sent word of that when he first came,' observed the gaoler drily. 'However, there is no harm done; he has been subjected to a little discipline, but he will enjoy himself all the more when you tell him it will not occur again.' Here he smoothed his chin—a very superfluous operation—and in so doing displayed upon his forefinger Pennicuick's signet ring.

'Oh, the ring!' said he, perceiving that Conway's eye had caught sight of it; 'the poor man had nothing else wherewith to

discharge his entrance fee. It may be redeemed, however, at a just valuation. Enter. Your friend is in the farther chamber.'

The gate opened on a passage, the walls of which were mere iron gratings, through which could be seen the prison yards, crowded with their half-naked and squalid inmates; at the end was a low door, which the gaoler unlocked, signing to Conway to pass in.

The chamber was so dark that he could but just perceive the short flight of steps that led down into it; it was in fact but a mere cell, half underground, and contained nothing in the way of furniture save a low wooden bed like a fishmonger's slab. Upon this was stretched, or rather was huddled up, a human form, whom his stumbling and somewhat noisy ingress had failed to rouse.

'Pennicuck, Ralph Pennicuck, it is I,' said Conway, in vague alarm. It was only an hour or so at farthest since he had stood beside his friend in the house of the mandarin, and had seen him depart in evil plight indeed, but in health and courage. And now the man lay before him, motionless and almost shapeless, with his eyes staring wildly at the wall.

'Is it really you, Connie?' answered the other, but without stirring a muscle. 'I was afraid we should not meet again. No, no, don't touch me'—Conway had striven to take the hand that lay nearest to him; 'I am one bruise.'

'What, in the devil's name, have they done to you, Penn?'

'I don't know; never mind now. What I want is, above *everything*—will you swear to get it me, Conway?'

'Yes, I will; whatever it is.'

'It is the bottle of laudanum out of my writing-case.'

Then in a moment Conway knew what had happened. His unhappy friend had been put to the torture, and wished to guard against the possibility of its recurrence. Under such circumstances he would perhaps have sympathised with the request in any case; but with the knowledge of what must needs await Pennicuck in the end he by no means repented of his promise. His ideas were sufficiently unconventional to see nothing worse in taking poison to avoid a lingering death than in taking chloroform to kill the pains of an 'operation.'

'You shall have the bottle, my dear fellow,' said he cheerily, 'just for a satisfaction to your mind; but I have taken measures that in future no hurt shall be done you in this accursed den. I had no idea, since the mandarin had passed his word you should be kindly treated, that such an *out* could be possible. I did but go to the boat to get 2 anded, I must say, for

very scant service; but perhaps he might have made it worse for both of us, and I thought——'

'If you had gone through what I have suffered for these last three hours'—interrupted Pennicuick with a bitter groan.

'My dear old Penn, you have not been here an hour.'

'It seems a lifetime, Conway. As for money,' continued Pennicuick peevishly, 'I would give all I possess in the world to get clear of these devils. It was because I had no coin about me that they hung me up by an arm and a leg—it seems so simple, but oh, Heaven, the agony of it! My wrist and ankles are in flames, and the rest of me is a cold jelly.'

And indeed, in spite of the closeness of the cell, the face and forehead of the unhappy man were wet and cold.

'Take this,' said Conway, putting a flask of brandy, which, hardly knowing why, but with a vague sense that it might be useful, he had thrust into his pocket on leaving the boat, to his companion's lips.

'Ah, that is life!' gasped Pennicuick gratefully. 'I am no longer a jelly; I am rising in the scale of development, and feel more like a turkey that has been boned. You are quite right about hell, Conway—there is such a place, for I have been in it. And now tell me about that hound of a mandarin, and what is to be done with me.'

'It seems the matter does not lie in his hands, Penn,' answered Conway gravely. 'It has been referred to the governor of the province.'

'Then give him 20,000*l.*, in the fiend's name, and let us get home,' cried Pennicuick vehemently. 'I tell you that money is no object to me—none. I must get home.'

'Indeed, Penn, I have done my best. I have offered, on your behalf, any sum the man would name; but my answer is that it would be useless; that the taking that infernal Shay-le is a sacrilege that cannot be atoned for by any bribe; that it would cost the governor's life to compromise the matter.'

'You are deuced cool about it, Conway,' said the other reproachfully.

'Do not say that, Penn. I endeavour to keep cool, as you call it, for your sake; that I may have my wits about me to take advantage of the least turn in the cards. So help me Heaven, I would give my right hand to see you out of this, and safe at Shanghae.'

'I do believe you, Connie. Forgive me.' There was a long silence, during which Conway was not ashamed to show the grief that consumed him.

'Don't do that, pray don't,' said Pennicuick. 'It is no use crying over spilt milk. Of course, I have been a fool, and shall have a high price to pay for my folly. You do think a price will pay for it, don't you? Tell me the truth.'

'While there is life, Penn, there is hope.'

'I understand,' said the other gravely. 'These devils mean to take my life. Well, we must all die some day.'

There was resolution in his tone, but no resignation. It was plain that the man, bold as he was, thought it very hard to die. The expression of his eyes, as he stared at the blank wall, was that of anger as well as despair.

'If I had only hold of him—of his windpipe—with my teeth,' he murmured grimly, 'then I should die content. Where is he?'

'Do you mean Fu-chow? He is in the prison somewhere, I believe. Don't waste a thought on him.'

'Oh, yes, he is in the prison; he spoke to me. By the by, tell me what is meant by the words "Ling-chih," Connie.'

Conway felt himself growing cold; his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth.

'Come, have courage,' said Pennicuick. 'After all, it is not your affair but mine. I wish to know the worst. What is "Ling-chih"?''

'It is a Chinese punishment.'

'I know that; what does it mean? that a man is boiled alive, or starved to death, or what?'

'It means literally "cut into ten thousand pieces."'

'How is that done?'

'I believe the poor wretch is tied to a post, and hacked about with a knife. Why speak of such horrors?'

'I will cease to do so when you have brought me the laudanum. In the mean time the matter concerns me a good deal, for such is to be my sentence. I gathered that much for a certainty from the enjoyment in Fu-chow's face when he communicated it to me in Chinese.'

Conway was silent. He had no comfort to give, and he did not wish to speak of Fu-chow. But, sitting on the wretched pallet, he laid his hand upon his friend's head with a tenderness that a woman might have envied.

'You will do everything that can be done, I am sure, Conway,' continued the other with unwonted softness; 'and you will not forget the laudanum.'

'Certainly not. Though I trust in Heaven there may be no need for using it.'

'I trust in you,' said Pennicuick significantly; 'and I have a

plan. The decree for "Ling-chih" will come, no doubt, and somebody must go through with it. But these wretches will do anything for money; not being Christians, like you, old fellow"—here he smiled after his old fashion—"they are not afraid of death. Of course, the torture must be taken into the account and paid for; let it be so. Why should I not purchase a substitute?"

The suddenness of this proposition put Conway's ideas to flight. It was so audacious, and also, as it struck him for the moment, so immoral. If he himself at least had committed any crime, he felt sure that he could not have permitted an innocent man to die for him. At the same time, the life of a Chinese was by no means in his eyes what that of an Englishman would have been. Moreover, it was not as if any compulsion was to be exercised; it was a simple contract. Every man who is a soldier, for the sake of a soldier's pay, may be said to sell his life; why not on the scaffold as in the field? Still, for the moment the suggestion startled him.

"Do you see any difficulties?" inquired Pennicuick impatiently. "The chief gaoler and his subordinates can be squared, and the mandarin has already shown his hand. It must, therefore, be a mere question of figures. Where the pinch will be is about the time. These fellows will not take my bare word, of course; we must send to Shanghai for something in the way of security for the money. But time can be bought like anything else, I suppose."

A keen admiration for his friend's wits began to mix with Conway's pity. What a clever fellow he must be to have thought out all this in his miserable and shaken condition; not concealing his own danger from himself, but selecting at once the only possible course that could avert it!

"I am pretty well off, Connie," continued Pennicuick, in a tone half jesting, half constrained; he was conscious that, to account for certain economies, he had always represented himself as less wealthy than he really was. "Even 20,000*l.* would not break me."

"I can easily believe that, my dear fellow," answered Conway drily. "It is a large sum, but not too large to give for a man's life."

"For my own life, no, begad. But that of a Chinaman is very different. Of course, no Englishman would part with his life at all, however high the offer. But my impression is that you will get your native substitute for a song—say, a fifty-pound note; while the rest of the money will go among the officials. When do you think this infernal decree will arrive?"

"The mandarin told me that he expected the reply from the governor of the province in eight-and-forty hours."

‘Well, ~~that~~ that will be my death doom, so we have no time to spare. You had better at once sound these scoundrels about providing a substitute. And, for Heaven’s sake, Connie, in case the luck goes all against me, remember the laudanum.’

(*To be continued.*)

Only a Portrait.

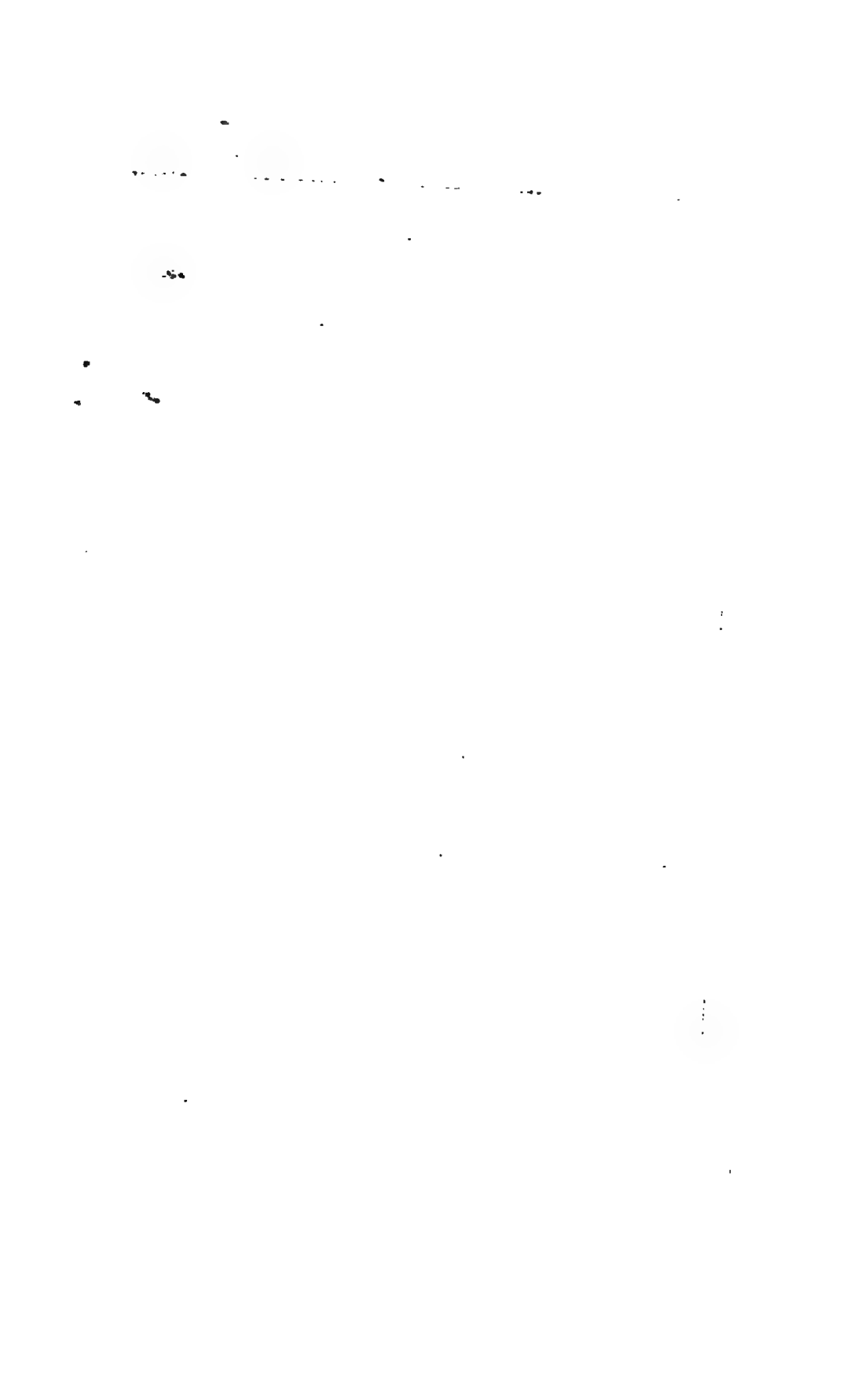
Ah, lost for aye!—I see again
The features, still so dear to me,
Of one who crossed the angry main,
To fly a love that might not be.

Unrighteous rites, that bound me fast
With worldly mammon’s golden chain!
I dread the future, mourn the past,—
For all my love was loved in vain.

No words could tell how hard to bear,
No idle tears my sorrows show;
I lost the true, and did not dare
To strike for freedom one bold blow.

We parted:—All that now is left
Is this poor portrait, that I hold
And cherish till, of life bereft,
My broken heart is still and cold.





The Homes and Haunts of the Italian Poets.

III. BOCCACCIO.

BY T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.

It is of necessity as absolute that Boccaccio should occupy the third place in any list or selection of Italian poets, using that word in its larger and truer sense, as that Dante should have the first and Petrarch the second. The universal voice of his countrymen would assign it to him; and the general impression of the world at large, gathered no doubt rather from the universality of those Italian suffrages than from any independent examination of the works which he has given to us, would give him the same place. But it may be confessed at once that the step down from the second to the third is a terribly long one. The first step we had to make from the first to the second on our list was a very short one—so short a one that those who would maintain that there was no room for any such step at all cannot be considered as having no *locus standi*. And there can be little doubt, I think, that if we were considering not ‘poets,’ but ‘men,’ the step would be the other way.

But look at our Boccaccio as we may, we have, after gazing on his two great predecessors, to come down from the empyrean to our own very familiar earth. Could the three men revisit the glimpses of the moon, we should at once clap Boccaccio on the shoulder and call him Giovanni, or probably Nanni—which is equivalent to Jack—as every Italian would; but we should bend in reverent awe before either of the two other mighty spirits. And Giovanni, as his biographers always fondly call him, would be the last man in the world to deem the difference uncalled for or unreasonable.

The first thing to be remarked as to our Boccaccio is, that the man whom the world has called so for some centuries bore, when he lived, no such name. His name was Giovanni (John), and, to distinguish him from many another John, Giovanni di Boccaccio di Chellino (John the son of Mouthy, the son of Little Michael). We find no trace of anything of the nature of a *surname* belonging to the family. Chellino (Little Michael—Michellino) was

the son of a Bonajuto; the son of Chellino was nicknamed 'Boccaccio,' doubtless with reference to his physiognomy (*bocca*, mouth; *boccaccio*, great ugly mouth); and the poet was Giovanni the son of Boccaccio. It is true that we find a grandson of the poet again bearing the name Boccaccio, which indicates the tendency of nicknames to grow into family- or sur-names; but the poet's son was named simply Jacopo, and not Boccaccio at all. The biographers dispute much as to the social position of Giovanni's forbears—whether they were of the lower populace or well-to-do citizens. It is uncertain and infinitely unimportant. What is certain is that they were not of patrician rank; that they came originally from Certaldo, of which place there will be occasion to say more presently; that before the poet's time they had become Florentine citizens; and that, however it may have been with Bonajuto and Little Michael, Boccaccio was a well-to-do merchant, in a sufficiently large way of business to take him to Paris in the prosecution of it.

Scarcely, however, have the biographers fought their way through this knotty point, when they plunge into a controversy of somewhat more interest. *Where* was the poet, John the son of Boccaccio, born? An immense amount of erudition and research has been expended in the investigation of this point, with the result, I think, of making it tolerably clear that he was born in the parish of Santa Felicità, in Florence. He was an illegitimate child. This is certain from the existence of a Papal dispensation permitting him to enter on the ecclesiastical career although canonically disqualified by reason of the illegitimacy of his birth, which instrument was discovered among the archives of Avignon. His mother is known to have been a Parisian girl¹ of the middle class, and it is certain that he was born in 1313. He speaks himself, in sundry passages of his works, of his birthplace, but always allusively only; and his utterances upon the subject appear to be inconsistent—a fact which his biographer Baldelli² explains by the remark that it was very likely that he and his friends were not wont to be explicit respecting the circumstances of his birth, from unwillingness that he should be known to be illegitimate. Certain passages from his works seem to favour the supposition that he was born in Paris, which some of his biographers have held to have been the fact; but I think that anyone who will con-

¹ Filippo Villani, *Vita*.

² *Vita di Giovanni Boccaccio*, scritta dal Conte Giov. Battista Baldelli. Firenze, 1806. 1 vol. 8vo. This and the work of the Canon Domenico Maria Mauni are the best authorities for the life of Boccaccio. *Istoria del 'Decamerone' di Giovanni Boccaccio*, scritta da Domenico Maria Mauni, Accademico Fiorentino. Firenze, 1742. 1 vol. 4to.

sult the second chapter of Manni's laborious work will come to the conclusion that Florence may fairly claim him.

The house in which he first saw the light of day cannot be pointed out with such accuracy as can that in which Dante was born; but the lounge in Florence may still amuse himself by wandering among the streets and alleys that were the earliest haunts of the young Giovanni. Near the foot of the Ponte Vecchio, on the south or 'Oltrarno' side of the river, the stranger pursuing his way towards the Pitti Palace may see a little church standing back at the farther end of a quiet little piazza: it is the parish church of Santa Felicità, and was that of Boccaccio the well-to-do merchant just returned from Paris, bringing with him the 'Parisian girl' who was about to become the mother of the poet. We hear nothing more of her; and it is probable that she did not long survive her transportation to the banks of the Arno. Shortly after his return from Paris it seems that Boccaccio married a Florentine lady, by whom he had several children, who all died in their childhood, and who died herself probably in, certainly about, 1341; for Giovanni, about to leave Naples, where he then was, writes that 'inevitable death, the end of all human things, has, of many sons, left me alone to my father, who thus remains, aged and a widower, with no one save a brother to care for his comfort, and without the hope of having anyone more,'¹ and that for that reason he was obliged to hasten back to Florence; but at a subsequent page of the same work² he tells us, with a quaint naïveté, 'he—i.e. Giovanni himself—has no wife, and she who recently was said to have come to his house came not to him, but to his father.' And, in fact, the old merchant married a second time—probably in 1343, when our poet was in his thirtieth year—a lady named Bice, of the Bosticchi family; and by her he had one son, Jacopo, who at old Boccaccio's death—probably in 1348—became the ward of his already celebrated half-brother Giovanni.

The exact spot on which the house stood, and in all probability for the most part still stands, may be identified by the existence of an ancient well—the 'Pozzo di Toscanella'—which was in the poet's day open and public, but has been subsequently appropriated by the owners of the dwelling in question and built into the house. It is at the corner of the Via Toscanella (one of the little lanes which make a labyrinth of the space enclosed between the Via Maggio and the river) and the Via Guicciardini. It is one of the most crowded and closely-built quarters of the city

¹ *Fiammetta*, lib. ii.

² *Ibid.* lib. vii.

and the house in which our Giovanni passed his first years, and the neighbouring lanes and little squares which were his earliest haunts, must have been sombre and dismal enough, and have made a very uncongenial home for a spirit so bright and so jovial. That he felt it to be so in no ordinary degree is shown by the following lines, written by him at a somewhat later period :—

Là non si ride mai, se non di rado :
 La casa oscura, e muta, e molto trista
 Me ritiene, e riceve a mal mio grado.
 Dove la cruda, ed orribile vista
 D' un vecchio freddo, ruvido, ed avaro
 Ogn' ora con affanno più m' attrista.
 Sì che l' aver veduto il giorno caro,
 E ritornare a così fatto ostello,
 Rivolge ben quel dolce in tristo amaro.
 Oh ! quanto si può dir felice quello,
 Che se in libertà tutto possiede :
 Oh ! lieto vivere, e più ch' altro bello.¹

It is not pleasant to bear a son under any circumstances so speak of his father ; yet, as we have seen, when the old man was left alone in his darksome, sad, and silent house, Giovanni—who was enjoying the brilliant and altogether congenial society of a circle of distinguished friends at Naples, and was moreover basking in the smiles of her to whom he had lost his heart—hastened to console the solitary widower, and speaks of the necessity of doing so in terms of tenderness. There can be no doubt, however, that there was but little sympathy or community of feeling or ideas between the old merchant and this son of the lawless loves of his youth. The disagreement between them was, perhaps, the first case on record of an incompatibility instances of which occur again and again in literary history. It is probable, however, that our Giovanni was not the first

Clerk foredoomed his father's soul to cross,
 Who penned a stanza when he should engross.

The old trader's heart had been set on seeing his son follow the same career ; and Giovanni, after having from his seventh

¹ These *terzetti* occur in the *Ameto*, a poem which he did not publish till 1343, but which must have been written a good deal earlier. The following prose translation is as nearly literal as possible :—

' There laughter is never or rarely heard ; the house, darksome and silent and very sad, keeps me in and receives me much against my will. There the cruel and horrible sight of an old man, cold, rugged, and avaricious, ever saddens me with affliction ; so that to have seen the joyous daylight, and then to return to such a home, surely turns that pleasure to bitterness. Oh ! how happy may he be said to be who possesses himself in entire liberty ! Oh ! happy life, more lovely than aught else ! '

to his tenth year attended the grammar school of one Giovanni da Strada, was apprenticed by his father to a merchant in a very large way of business, with whom he remained six years; and here is his own account of the step so taken and of the result obtained from it: 'I well remember,' he writes¹ many years afterwards, 'that my father used his utmost endeavour in my childhood to make a merchant of me, and that he placed me, when I was yet a youngster just beginning arithmetic, as a pupil with a very large trader, with whom for the space of nearly six years I did nothing else but purposelessly waste that irrecoverable time.' And here, from the same work, is his autobiographical reminiscence of what next befell him:—

'After that, inasmuch as it appeared, from the circumstances of the case, that I was fitter for the cultivation of literature, my father ordered me to commence the study of canon law, under the persuasion that I should by that means achieve fortune; and thus, under a most celebrated teacher, I laboured for an equal space of time in vain.'

One can fancy the arid old trader, when the conviction was forced upon him that this graceless son of his would handle any books rather than a ledger, unwillingly consenting that he should adopt the driest of all possible studies, as the least concession that it was possible for him to make. But it was all no use. Fair Poësy had marked the young Giovanni for her own, and canon law could dispute her empire no more successfully than trade.

It seems that it must have been during this period of six years vainly given up to the study of the canon law that Giovanni first went to Naples. The chronology of this part of his life is extremely obscure. In the various passages of his own works in prose and verse, and in the letters in which he speaks of the events of this part of his youth, he generally fixes the dates in such an allusive and fantastic manner, referring to the constellations and the signs of the zodiac rather than to the ordinary methods of computation, that his biographers are driven to intricate astronomical computations in their endeavours to bring out a clear story from his scattered utterances. No amount of patient labour has been spared in these intricate investigations; but the result has not been a very successful one; and the truth is that, as regards the dates of the events of the story and of the many journeyings which took him backwards and forwards between Florence and Naples, and to other cities of Italy, little more than probability can be attained. It appears to be certain that his first journey to

¹ *Generat. Deorum*, lib. xv. ch. x.

Naples was made at the command of his father, doubtless for purposes connected with the prosecution of his canonical studies. But 'l'homme propose et Dieu—ou femme—dispose;' and if the careful old merchant, who was so anxious that his son should turn out anything rather than a poet, could have guessed what this journey to Naples was to bring about, he would have rather sent the young canonist to any other place in the world.

The Court of Naples was at that time one of the most brilliant and cultivated in Europe. King Robert of Anjou, who reigned thirty-four years—from 1309 to 1343—declared that he valued more highly his reputation as a poet and a philosopher than his title of king. It was prizing the latter very lowly indeed; but the boast suffices to indicate his tendencies and tastes, and the nature of the circle of distinguished men he gathered around him. That he really did enjoy some amount of literary reputation in contemporary Europe is quite sufficiently proved by the fact of Petrarch having selected him to be his formal 'examiner' in poetry before going to receive the laurel crown at Rome. That notable manifestation of the ideas and manners of the literary and learned world of the fourteenth century took place in March 1341, the thirty-seventh year of Petrarch's life and the twenty-eighth of Boccaccio's; and no doubt the two poets—for the younger man had already become such—then became acquainted with each other, though the intimate friendship and affection which subsequently sprung up between them dated from a later period.

And, in truth, our Giovanni's entire head and heart and soul were just at that time occupied in a manner which doubtless prevented him from taking as lively an interest in the advent of his celebrated fellow-Tuscan¹ as he would otherwise have done. It was just then, in that same spring of 1341, that he first felt that great and enduring passion which exercised so great an influence on his subsequent literary career, and on the especial place in the literary history of the world which he has held for more than five centuries.

It was at church—the combination is one which recurs with singular frequency—that he first saw the beautiful girl whom the world has ever since known by the name of Fiammetta. 'Her tresses,' he tells² us, 'of a blonde hue, for which it is scarcely

¹ Not that we must picture to ourselves such fellowship in Tuscan birth as exercising any such influence on the men of the fourteenth century as our own habits of thought might lead us to suppose. Petrarch and Boccaccio must have considered each other as essentially *foreigners*, as an Englishman deems a German at the present day. Florence and Arezzo were not only independent, but hostile communities.

² *Amelo*, p. 59.

possible to find any comparison, shadowed a snow-white forehead, admirable for its well-proportioned amplitude, in the lower portion of which two jet black and infinitely slender brows rise in circling arches, divided from each other by a candid space; and beneath them two lovely eyes, such rogues in their movement that the light flashing from their beauty renders it scarcely possible to be sure what they really are. The slender nose is exactly proportioned to what the perfect beauty of the face requires; the cheeks have no other colour than that of milk which the living blood has just newly tinged, and the vermilion mouth is in appearance that of roses among the whitest lilies; the chin, not protruding, but rounded, and dimpled in the centre, is poised above the milk-white and straight throat and the soft neck.' And the poet's description proceeds to catalogue, with equal minuteness and descriptive power, every other part of a person corresponding in every respect with so lovely a face.

Now this the poet's Fiammetta, the muse which inspired his first songs, was 'known among mortals' as 'Maria;' but by what further appellation she was known we know not, for neither the poet himself nor any of his earliest biographers have thought fit to tell it us. It was—this other name—doubtless not a pleasing one to her lover; for, alas! it was the name of her husband. We are not left, however, without further interesting information as to who and what the lady was. She was the reputed daughter of a gentleman of the Aquino family, whose wife, a lady of exalted birth, had been attached to the Court of King Robert—who was, in fact, supposed to be Maria's real father—and who caused her to be carefully educated, and in due time married her to a gentleman of rank equal to her own. Her husband, we are told, was young and not unfitted to please; but Fiammetta was not like Laura, and the youthful poet seems to have had but little difficulty in leading her to prefer him to her husband. Of the story and fortunes of their loves, and of the exit of them, little can now be known beyond the fact that Fiammetta had to suffer the torments of jealousy, occasioned, as far as we are told, no otherwise than by the absences of her lover at Florence and by malignant reports of his infidelity and even of his marriage—the report of which he contradicted, as has been mentioned. There were lovers' quarrels and lovers' reconciliations; but all these facts, if facts they are, are only gathered from his own works in prose and verse, and it is difficult to tell how much may be intended for fact and how much for fiction. The 'Fiammetta,' from which poem the greater part of such notices are gathered, is supposed by the poet to be written by the lady of his love; and

the expression of the love, of the jealousy, of the fears and torments, is supposed to be the story of her feelings put into her mouth by the object of them.

The 'Fiammetta,' however, was not the first work of which his passion was the motive. He appears to have written his first work, the 'Filocopo,' a romance in prose, during that same 1341, as it should seem at the instigation of, or at least for the pleasure of, his mistress. It is a story of true love, in which he shows his proficiency in the new classical learning by substituting a machinery of heathen gods and goddesses for the witchcraft and incantations of the earlier romancers. It will suffice to say of it that it is almost entirely worthless even in the judgment of Tuscan critics and commentators; the matter is futile and tedious to an intolerable degree, and the poet's warmest admirers among his countrymen confess that it has no merit whatever in point of style and language. Certainly Fiammetta was no Laura, and successful love furnished no such inspiration of head and heart to the Florentine as unsuccessful and curbed love did to the poet of Arezzo.

But Giovanni's meeting with Fiammetta was not the only circumstance arising out of his residence at Naples that contributed to the destruction of his father's hopes. Already in 1338, between two and three years before he first saw her, the musings which had filled his mind as he stood on the spot hallowed as the tomb of Virgil had determined him to devote himself to the service of the Muses. He was then in his twenty-fifth year, and the aspirations that he there conceived, and the resolutions that he then registered in his heart, continued to be the ruling and guiding stars of his career long after his passion for poor Fiammetta, and all the surrounding circumstances and feelings of that phase of his life, had been long since forgotten. To estimate aright in all its force the influence which that visit to the tomb of Virgil was calculated to produce on the mind of our Giovanni, we must remember the enormous effect which had been produced on the minds of all the men of letters in Europe by the renaissance of the ancient literature, and how much greater the distance was which separated the greatest ancients from the greatest moderns in those days than that which exists between moderns and ancients in our own time. The power of reading the works of Virgil was to Boccaccio and his contemporaries as the blazing forth of a new and almost a divine revelation. The powerful impression produced on his imagination by the visit to the spot in question was less ephemeral than similar effects are wont to be; and the resolution taken in that moment was consistently followed by him, though not at all periods of his life

in the same spirit, during the entire future course of his existence.

The years from his first going to Naples till 1350 were in all probability spent by him mainly in that city, though his sojourn there was interrupted by various journeys to Florence; and there can be little doubt that, as his stay there was prolonged much beyond the time at which he finally abandoned all idea of studying the canon law, the attraction that detained him there was Fiammetta. He might well, however, have said, with a slight modification of the well-known words of the English poet—

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not *poesy* more!

For, though Tiraboschi is in all probability in error in supposing, in opposition to all his other biographers, that his passion for Fiammetta was all mere poetical fiction and material for poetry, yet it is clear that his 'muse made increment' of his love and the vicissitudes of it all, and that his devotion to his mistress was not incompatible with a very considerable amount of literary activity and production.

The 'Teseide,' his first important poem, if not altogether his first essay in verse-making, was written during these years. It is principally notable as having been the first attempt at the romantic epic. And it is certain that, from the time of its first appearance till the days when Bojardo and Pulci superseded it in the admiration of the Italians, it formed the delight of successive generations. There is no hope that it will charm anyone more. It would probably be a safe bet that no living Italian has ever read the whole of it. It is intolerably prolix, dull, and incorrect. Even the Tuscans do not pretend that it is otherwise. Yet the genius of the writer who invented the structure of the stanza which Ariosto and Tasso used to such purpose, improving the old Sicilian octave with its poor two rhymes, must be held to merit, if only on that ground, a place on the Italian Parnassus.

To this period belongs also the 'Ameto,' a novel of mingled prose and verse. The idea of the fiction is taken from Theocritus, but the subject-matter is wholly concerned with Florentine places and persons, save that Fiammetta is introduced among them. The scene is laid close to Florence, in the valley of the Mugnone, where a company of nymphs and shepherds are brought together by various sufficiently bold and inartistic means, and there tell stories of their loves. The only particle of interest to be found in the work at the present day consists in the allusions rather than statements which abound in it to the events of his own history, and

in the possibility of so piecing together scattered passages and minute facts as to discover with fair probability of correctness the real names of the personages the author intended to indicate by his fictitious appellations. But in the first case his references are so obscure, so indirect, and conveyed in such figurative language, that the biographical notices to be obtained from them are only to be extracted by the laborious ingenuity of one thoroughly well versed in the subject; and in the second the interest of the result, when obtained, is only for those who have been cradled in the shade of the Campanile of Giotto.

The celebrated expulsion of the Duke of Athens from Florence occurred during one of Giovanni's temporary sojourns in that city. The tyrant so called was proclaimed Lord of Florence on September 8, 1342, and was driven out on July 26, 1343; which helps to fix the date of one of our poet's journeys to Florence, and secures for us a vivid narrative of that event in the 9th book of his work on '*Illustrious Unfortunates*.' It was also, as it would seem, during this sojourn at Florence that his father married for the second time. And that event set him free to return at once to Naples. There he found all changed. King Robert was dead, and his sceptre had passed into the utterly unworthy hands of his grand-daughter Giovanna, who had been given in marriage by the old king her grandfather to his nephew Andrew of Hungary, after the much-lamented death of his son. Giovanna's Neapolitan education at the Court of her grandfather had sufficed to render the unlettered roughness of her husband disgusting to her, and had at the same time divested her of any scruples as to getting rid of him and supplying his place according to the most lawless caprices of her own profligate inclinations. Andrew was murdered by conspirators abetted by her, who called him from his wife's side in the night of September 18, 1345, under the pretence that important letters had arrived for him, while she urged him to go out to receive them. It was not till 1347 that Giovanna's crimes and profligacy caused her expulsion from her kingdom, and it was in the following year that her restoration took place. And all these events are narrated by Boccaccio in his '*Eclogues*,' published subsequently, in terms which show that he was at Naples at the time. It is not pleasant to find him speaking as a strong partisan and admirer of the Queen Giovanna;¹ but it must be remembered

¹ In his dedication of his work on *Illustrious Women* he says: 'Before all others my mind recurs to that most worthy woman, the brightest ornament of Italy, and the glory not only of her sex, but of royalty, Giovanna, the most illustrious Queen of Jerusalem and Sicily.' It is certainly extraordinary to hear such a man so speak of such a woman as history has judged Giovanna to have been.

that many facts that subsequently were made clear and undeniable to the whole world may have been denied, and considered doubtful and disputable, at that time. Probably Boccaccio did not believe that Giovanna was guilty of the murder of her husband. And as for her immoralities, in an age which judged such matters in the spirit of Southern Europe in the fourteenth century, it was hardly to be expected that a man such as our Giovanni was in his youth should have been a very severe censor of a beautiful young queen who distinguished him with especial favour.

For Giovanna had inherited her grandfather's taste for literature and literary men; and it must be confessed that the literary taste of the young and beautiful patroness, and that of the youthful poet, as it was at that period of his life, were but too well suited to each other. It was to please this profligate queen that he wrote, during this period of his stay at Naples, a considerable portion of the work on which his immortality rests—his 'Decameron.' And we may assume, without much chance of error, that the stories written for the especial delectation of Giovanna were precisely those the authorship of which he so bitterly regretted in after years. In an extant letter, he exhorts Mainardo de' Cavalcanti not to allow his young wife to read the 'Decameron,' on the ground both of the mischief it might do to her, and also of the injury which the reading of the book might inflict on his own reputation; 'for,' he goes on to say, 'there is not everywhere at hand somebody who might rise to urge in my excuse, "He was but a youth when he wrote thus, and he did it constrained by the authority of a superior"'—doubtless Giovanna.

Of the celebrated 'Decameron' itself, it may be said that to an English nineteenth-century critic the popular idea of the merit of the book, and that of the wickedness of it, are both much exaggerated. But in forming such a judgment he must bear in mind that one of the grounds on which Boccaccio's countrymen have deemed and made his great work immortal is altogether beyond his ken. Up to the present time the Italians have divided the attention they have bestowed on any literary work between the matter and the manner of it in proportions very different from those which we ourselves are wont to be guided by. Beauties of style and diction are with them as important in literature as method and treatment are in any other form of art; and all the most competent Italian judges in every successive age have agreed in awarding the highest praise to the 'Decameron' as a *testo di lingua*—a phrase by which the Italians designate those of their great classics which the Della Cruscan Academy has stamped as authorities in diction and style. The other works of our great prose

poet do not by any means share the admiration in this respect which the Italians of many generations have agreed in bestowing on the 'Decameron.' One or two of the prose works produced in the later part of his life are admitted to share, but in a lesser degree, the praise due to the 'Decameron' as a *testo di lingua*, but no other of his productions to anything like the same extent. The interest attaching to the subject has in every age caused the 'Life of Dante' and the lectures on the 'Divina Commedia' to be read. But with these exceptions it may be said that the reputation of Giovanni the son of Boccaccio the son of Chellino of Certaldo, has rested, and will rest, entirely on the 'Decameron.' And it may be as well, for the benefit of the rising generation, to tell what the 'Decameron' is.

The word, as non-Grecians may not be aware, signified a ten-days' spell or bout at anything. In this case it is a ten-days' bout at story-telling. The author feigns that a company of seven young Florentine women, and three men, determined to fly from Florence, which was being decimated by the terrible plague of 1348, and take refuge in one of the delicious villas in the environs, isolating themselves from all contact with the outer world, and determining to pass the time as joyously as they might in the society of each other, and in such amusements as were attainable in such a retirement. The principal of these is found to be story-telling. Each of the party tells a story every day, and thus in ten days a hundred novelettes have been produced. The introduction to the work, setting forth the circumstances which are supposed to bring the party together, consists partly of a description of the sufferings of Florence from the pestilence, which is, perhaps, the finest bit of writing in the book—so vivid is the picture, so terse in its fulness the description, so perfect the artistic instinct, which has dictated the choice of the incidents and details to be introduced.

I have said that it seems to me that an English reader must be struck by the exaggeration, as it will appear to him, of both the praise and the blame that his countrymen have awarded to the 'Decameron.' With regard to the first—bearing in mind, however, that the pages he is reading have doubtless excellences and merits of a kind to which he is perforce insensible—he will, I fear, find that the stories, as such, are for the most part jejune, pointless, puerile, and uninteresting. He will probably be struck by the fact that there is so evident and naive an absence of any attempt on the part of the author to import into his fictions any of those characteristics which we are in the habit of considering needful for giving interest to fiction, that we are driven

to the conclusion that the audience for whom such narratives were intended desiderated something very different from anything that would content a novel-reader, even the most omnivorous, of the present day. There is little or no attempt at any delineation of human character; and it may safely be said that more of those touches of nature that make all the world akin may be found in one canto of the '*Divina Commedia*' than in the whole of the '*Decameron*.' Something, but not much, may be gleaned towards the formation of a conception of the ways of thinking and living at Florence in the fourteenth century—not much in comparison with what might be expected from a hundred stories concerned for the most part with the people and ordinary modes of living of the day. For even as regards those of the celebrated stories which originally belonged to other writers, and other times and places, the actors in Boccaccio's hands become essentially Florentine. And the fact that they do so is the sufficient reply to the accusations of plagiarism which have—very absurdly for the most part—been brought against the great Florentine novelist. But on this point it will be necessary to say a few words presently. In a word, the modern reader who should open the '*Decameron*' with a view to amusement of the kind ordinarily expected in the present day from a work of fiction would be disappointed; and it may be said with equal truth that the admirer of the modern French school of fiction who should be led, by the censures which have been passed on the '*Decameron*,' to suppose that he would find there abundant gratification of his taste, would be disappointed also. As I have said, an English reader of the present day would probably think that the '*Decameron*' had been both over-praised and over-blamed by the critics of the successive centuries who have admired it and shaken their heads over it; and it may be assumed without fear of mistake, I think, that by far the largest amount of unfavourable English opinion on the subject has been adopted at second—or rather at third or fourth—hand from the censures of the author's own countrymen. But people have very generally lost sight of the fact that Tuscan opinion, contemporary and subsequent, was blaming the writer for one thing and English opinion for another. There can be little doubt, I think, that the general English notion is that the '*Decameron*' is a grossly indecent book, disfigured in most of, if not in all, its pages by abominable indelicacy, to use no coarser word. But the main ground on which Boccaccio, and the '*Decameron*' especially, was blamed by the contemporaries of the author, and in a less degree by subsequent generations of the Italians, was the irreligious tendency of the author's mind and works. He very

frequently ridicules monks and nuns, and relates stories to their disadvantage. He not unfrequently speaks of the sacraments of the Church with what was felt to be unbecoming levity, and writes generally in an irreverent tone, which certainly must have been offensive to devout Catholics. This tone marks the whole texture of the '*Decameron*,' very much more generally than the indecency which stains a few of the stories. This was what his contemporaries felt to be reprehensible. This was what the kindly, pure-minded, and devout Petrarch censured and sighed over, and this doubtless was what lay heaviest on the poet's conscience when, in his latter years, he repented of having written what all the world was reading.

Not, of course, that the '*Decameron*' is free from coarseness in very many of its pages; and the presence of this—especially the way in which such language is used and such matters spoken of in all innocence of heart—affords one of the most curious indications of the tone and manners of the time and clime which the work affords us. It must be remembered that the seven ladies who narrate and listen to these stories are represented as having been thoroughly virtuous and discreet persons, and that the association with them of the three gentlemen under the terrible circumstances of the time was of an entirely irreproachable nature. The marvel is that such persons should have sate in a circle with such anti-fignleaf simplicity, and so talked to each other. In the great majority of cases, it is to be observed, it is insensibility to the claims of decency, not cynical indifference to morality, that we have to complain of—indelicacy, and not viciousness, that offends us. And looking at the matter as one of morality, and of the mischief risked by the young in such reading, it may be affirmed with the utmost confidence that there is not a page of the '*Decameron*' that is not innocent and edifying in comparison with several of the books which have recently obtained in France the largest measure of success and approbation.

Still it has to be confessed that some few of the stories are such as no decent woman would like to confess that she had read, and no man of ordinarily refined taste would care to read. For the grossness is in almost every instance unredeemed by any scintillation of wit or humour. The first instance of the kind occurs in the fourth novel of the first day; and when it has been related we are told that the ladies blushed as they laughed at it. Every now and then also a story not in itself offensive is disfigured, even when one of the ladies is the story-teller, by the casual use of so outrageously coarse a word that the chance of meeting with such

is a sufficient reason why English ladies had better leave the 'Decameron' unopened.

With regard to the charge of impiety, it may be admitted that Boccaccio, despite his tonsure, was not naturally of a reverential turn of mind; that he was disposed to speak lightly of many things which the respectable opinion of his day required to be spoken of gravely; that he could not forbear from exposing and scoffing at what seemed to him hypocritical pretences to sanctity; and that in some instances his mode of speaking of things deemed sacred made some small approach towards the tone which became common enough among his countrymen a century later. As regards this aspect of our poet's backslidings, however, there will, I think, be found very little, if anything, which would offend a Protestant reader of the nineteenth century. And it is curious to observe that in proportion as his offences belonging to the former category appear to us graver and more unpardonable, so those of the latter sort have grown to be venial and insignificant.

It is worth while, perhaps, to give one instance of the sort of matter that gave grave offence in Boccaccio's day, and was twisted into significance calculated to afford a foundation for the most serious accusations. The third novel of the first day is entitled 'Melchisedeck, a Jew, escapes a great danger prepared for him by the Sultan Saladin by means of a Story of Three Rings.' The Jew is very rich, and the Sultan, in need of money, sends for him, having invented the idea of asking him which is the true religion, and then, if the Jew should say either the Christian or the Jewish, punishing him for his heterodoxy; but if he should say the Mahometan, punishing him for not practising what he knows to be true. The Jew answers by telling the following story: 'A certain man had three sons and a ring of inestimable value, and he willed that to whichever of his sons he should give this ring he should be lord of all his fortune, and of his brethren. They were all three excellent young men; but each of them, eager for the pre-eminence in question, was continually imploring the father to give him the ring. Bothered in this way, the old gentleman sent for a jeweller and had two imitation rings made, which could not be distinguished from the original jewel. And he gave one of the three rings to each of his sons; the result being that after his death it was impossible to tell which had been appointed his heir, and the question is still pending to the present day.'

On this story the gravest of all the accusations of impiety brought against our author was founded. It was first discovered that the author of the novel evidently was of opinion that one

religion was as good as another ; and this point having been established, it needed only one step more to be convinced that he was the author of a certain horribly impious book entitled '*De Tribus Impostoribus*'—the three impostors being of course Moses, Christ, and Mahomet—the fame of which was greatly vexing the world at that time. It would seem, however, that, despite the fame of this much-abused production, no such book ever existed ; and no mention of it can be found by anyone who declares that he himself had ever seen it ; and in the second place the very trite and bald story of the Jew and the three rings is, like a great number—perhaps the greater number—of the hundred stories of the '*Decameron*,' taken from an older writer. Baldelli, Boccaccio's latest biographer, says that Bayle is one of those who accuse Boccaccio of having been the author of the book '*De Tribus Impostoribus*.' But Bayle says nothing whatever of the kind ; he simply names one obscure writer who, he says, made that accusation against him.

In 1350 Boccaccio was in his thirty-seventh year, and those pleasant days at Naples to which he looked back with so much remorse when age, rather probably by the process of chilling his blood than by that of maturing his wisdom, had made all things in heaven and earth seem different to him from what they had once appeared, had to come to an end. The active and serious business of life was about to begin for him, and the shape in which it came to him is a proof that, whatever may be said or surmised of his life up to this period, he had acquired a position of no ordinary eminence among his contemporaries ; for the prime years of his manhood seem to have been spent in undertaking, and successfully executing, a series of embassies for the Florentines to various of the potentates of Italy. The reader has seen that both Dante and Petrarch were largely occupied in the same career ; and the practice of selecting such men as the representatives of sovereign States is an interesting feature of the manners and ways of thinking of the time.

It would seem that it was in the autumn of 1350 that Boccaccio first became personally acquainted with Petrarch at Florence. The latter was then at Florence on a diplomatic mission, and Boccaccio was about to proceed to Romagna—first, as it seems probable, to the little sovereign Court of the Ordelaffi, at Forlì, and then to Ravenna. An immense amount of learning and research has been expended in efforts, more or less unsatisfactory, to fix the exact dates of various journeys which occupied Boccaccio's life about this period ; but it surely is sufficient for our purpose to know in a general way what the employment of these middle years of his life was, and to be able to picture him to our imaginations in his various appearances as ambassador of the

Florentine Republic at Forlì, at Ravenna, at Padua, at Avignon, and on the Rhine.

It was in December of the year 1350 that the poet started on his mission to Romagna, and it was in the November of that year that he and Petrarch, who was at Florence on a diplomatic mission, first became friends. Boccaccio's appointment to his embassy must have been signified to him, therefore, when he and Petrarch first learned to know each other; and both the poets must have been frequently called by their affairs to that heart of old Florence the Palazzo della Signoria in the piazza of the same name. There can be no doubt either that Petrarch was a frequent visitor in the darksome and sombre old house at the corner of the Via di Toscanella, of which it may be safely conjectured that its present master could no longer have said of it, as he did in the boyish days when it was so unsympathetic a home to him—

Lì non si ride mai.

Francesco Petrarco at that time of his life must have had a genial laugh in him; and if there was such a thing in all his composition, it was sure to have been brought to the surface by companionship with Messer Giovanni, whose jolly appearance had by that time of his life assumed a characteristic conformity with his jovial character. The nature and temperament of the two men, close friends as they became, were very markedly different. And it must be admitted that the high-minded gravity and lofty idiosyncrasy of the older man must have—probably with a loving compassion—stooped a little to sympathise with the more earthy temperament and less high-strung nature of genial, jovial Giovanni, whom we figure to ourselves as replying to the half-grave, half-smiling head-shakings of his friend in the spirit of the old glee—

Let me enjoy the cheerful day
Ere many a year has o'er me rolled;
Pleased let me trifle life away
And sing of love ere I grow old!

Nevertheless the trifling life away was already over for Boccaccio; and the genial bookish talk between the two bachelor diplomates in the house at Santa Felicità had doubtless often to be broken off to attend the council at the Palazzo della Signoria.

Let us shut out for a moment the light of our nineteenth-century day, and turn the glass of our magic lantern on Florence in the last months of the year 1350. We see crossing the circle of magic light two figures clad in the old Florentine *lucco*, falling in heavy, column-like folds from neck to ankle, with caps pro-

vided with warm lappets covering the ears, and an overpiece crossing the forehead, passing over the top of the head, and falling down the nape of the neck behind. The slenderer figure is dressed wholly in black. The *lucco* which wraps the stout, portly figure of his companion is of a sober but somewhat lighter hue, and the lappets of his cap coming from under the black, cowl-like head-dress are scarlet. They walk slowly, chatting as they go. On the top of the central arch of the Ponte Vecchio—that old bridge which is still the only remaining specimen in Europe of the once common street-bridges with houses on them on either side—they pause, availing themselves by a common impulse of the opening there left between the houses to gaze for a minute or two down the course of the Arno at the lovely distant view of the range of Carrara mountains, which the early winter sunset is just beginning to touch with gold.

‘Morning grey and evening red
Sends the shepherd happy to bed!’

says the younger and stouter of the two, in a cheery jovial voice, quoting an old Tuscan weather saw, the exact counterpart of the English one.

‘Thinkst thou so, Giovanni?’ returns the other. ‘Metbinks the moon rising there over the Pisan mountain looks somewhat watery. But what is her fickleness compared to that of our masters in the Sala del Consiglio? I would my errand were sped with them.’

‘Leave the State troubles in the State chambers, maestro mio. Carry them not forth with thee to smirch the face of this fair world withal. Was there, thinkst thou, in Paradise—or will there be—any lovelier horizon than that?’ rejoins the stouter man, stretching out his arm over the parapet of the bridge and over the river—then unspanned by any other below it—towards the serrated western mountain range, his eye beaming with unmixed enjoyment of the beauty of it.

‘If only the human element in the scene were more worthy of the Divine!’ sighed the older poet, anticipating the thought of one who was to follow him after four centuries should be passed and gone. ‘But as to the glory which shall be,’ he continued in a graver tone, ‘of that, my Giovanni, it becometh not you nor me to indulge our feeble fancies with vain imaginings of it. To one man only, our common master, has it been given to tread those realms of light with a firm foot. We may hardly think to

‘Where all save the spirit of man is divine!’ says Byron of Greece.

follow him in his eagle flight. But we must be going to the Palazzo !'

And so they stroll on, by the little chapel at the bridge-foot, where both reverently cross themselves and bow their cowed heads, through the narrow street of the Por Santa Maria, overhung by frowning towers long since levelled, the mark of patrician residences, and so into the great Piazza della Signoria, stopping in their walk ever and anon to turn to each other at some interesting point in their discourse, and but partially aware that they are the cynosure of neighbouring eyes, till the vast dark portal of the Palazzo swallows them up ; and they vanish as we shut our magic glass into the unfathomable darkness of the past.

Thrice, at the bidding of the Republic, Boccaccio undertook a journey to Avignon—once, in 1354, to Innocent VI., in order to ascertain (which it was exceedingly difficult to do) the Pontiff's real sentiments as to the proposed coming to Italy of Carlo, King of Bohemia, then elected Emperor ; and once again, in 1365, to Urban V., to persuade him that his doubts of the friendly and devout sentiments of the Florentines towards the Holy See were unfounded. But we may easily imagine that the embassy which the travelled poet undertook with the most pleasure was that which took him to Padua on the errand of persuading Petrarch to accede to the pressing invitation of the Signory to make Florence his home. The date of this expedition to Padua, as that of so many other of Boccaccio's journeys, is uncertain, although we have two accounts of it—one by the Archbishop of Ragusa, Ludovico Beccadelli, in his '*Life of Petrarch*,' and the other by Petrarch himself in the letter he sent back to the Florentines by the hands of Boccaccio. He writes as follows at the conclusion of it :—

'What else have I to pray for than that I may be so fortunate as to preserve this your favourable feeling towards me to the end of my life? For the rest, as to my intention of returning [to Florence], if God shall permit, and as to my earnest desire to obey your behests, I will not write all I would say, but leave somewhat to the living words of your messenger. The illustrious man Giovanni, son of Boccaccio, from whom I received your letters, exhortations, and orders, is now here, and will with faithful hand deliver this letter to you, as he will more eloquently express to you my sentiments. When you hear him, consider that you hear me speaking by his mouth. May your Republic ever flourish in happiness and prosperity !'

Few readers will not have seen, or will have forgotten, Walter Savage Landor's inimitable '*Pentameron*,' the description of a five-days' visit of Petrarch to his friend at Certaldo. There is no reason to

believe that any such visit ever really took place. But the embassy to Padua was not the last time that Petrarch and Boccaccio met. We find evidence in the letters of the former that Boccaccio visited him at Milan, probably in the year 1355, and a second time at Venice, in all probability in 1363. And the incident called by his biographers 'the conversion of Boccaccio' must, as it would seem, have happened between these two epochs. The incident referred to happened in this wise: A pious hermit, one Pietro Petroni, who lived at the Certosa of Siena, and had been greatly grieved by the use Giovanni, the now celebrated poet, made of the talents God had given him, sent from his dying bed a messenger—a certain Father Ciani—to Boccaccio, to warn him to repent and change his life. The poet was so stricken in conscience, that he became thenceforward a new man; and in the first violence of his change of mind he proposed to destroy all his books, all the ancient MSS. he had collected with infinite expense and labour, and everything connected with profane studies; but his first impulse was to write to his friend Petrarch, who had often remonstrated with him on the laxity of his conduct, and seek his advice and guidance in the future management of his life. Petrarch replied in a tone of moderation and good sense, greatly rejoicing in the change in his friend's sentiments, but pointing out to him that such a change in no wise made it necessary for him to forswear the study of the ancients.

The nature of the works written by Boccaccio after this period shows that the change of mind which had been operated in him was a genuine and permanent one. The principal writings belonging to this later period of his life were the four great works in Latin and in prose—the 'Genealogy of the Gods,' the first attempt to set forth the story of the ancient mythology; the treatise on 'Rivers and Mountains,' that on 'Illustrious Women,' and lastly that on 'Illustrious Victims of Misfortune.' Before this he had written his much more widely read 'Life of Dante' in Italian, which after the 'Decameron' has always been considered by the Tuscan Della Crusceans as one of the author's choicest specimens of style. It was not till 1373 that he received the very remarkable honour of his appointment by the Florentine Government to read lectures on the 'Divina Commedia;' and although he was by that time broken in health, and though he says of himself, in a letter to Mainardo de' Cavalcanti, 'I am now in my sixtieth year; I have lived long enough—ay, and lived much—and I have seen what my ancestors never saw,' he spared no labour to discharge the task which had been entrusted to him by his country *efficiently and honourably both to himself and to the greater sub-*

ject of his labours. Next to the 'Decameron,' it has been by his Dantescan labours that Boccaccio has been best known to his countrymen and to the world of letters generally.

But before the curtain finally drops it is yet permitted to us to obtain one more parting glimpse across the mist of the intervening five hundred years at our kind-hearted, genial, jovial Giovanni, who in an age of bitter hatreds and internecine feuds made no enemies, and who, if he was sometimes, as the saying is, his own enemy, won 'the wise who frowned before to smile at last.' And it is a glimpse which, as it shows the peaceful and tranquil closing of so busy and agitated a life, is perhaps the pleasantest, as it certainly is the fittest, for our leave-taking.

Our Giovanni always wrote himself 'Giovanni di Boccaccio da Certaldo'—the place whence his forefathers originally came to Florence, where they seem always to have possessed some small patrimony, and whither the poet, full of years and honours, retired to end his days. Certaldo is some five- or six-and-twenty miles from Florence, and is a station on the line of rail between Empoli on the Val d' Arno and Siena. The little town crests the summit of a curving hill, at the foot of which the rail runs along the valley of the Elsa, one of the most fertile of Tuscany. A new town, as in so many another similar case, has arisen in the neighbourhood of the rail; and whatever slender elements of activity and prosperity may yet remain in the place have been thus drawn off from the ancient town to aliment the modern upstart. The decadence of old Certaldo is therefore complete. Yet the ancient and venerable *rocca*, or fortress, as these old towns so situated are invariably called, still stands begirt with its crumbling walls, and, though apparently owing nothing for many a past year to the repairing hand of mason, bricklayer, or carpenter, still bids grim defiance to Father Time, and continues to afford a shelter to the descendants of Boccaccio's fellow-townsmen. A modern zigzag road has been constructed, by which carriages may now ascend from the valley to the old town; but the old paved way up to the town still remains, and, like most others of the old hill-roads of Tuscany, was evidently intended only for horses or mules, and must have been severe climbing for them. We may, I think, feel sure that portly Messer Giovanni never attempted the ascent on foot; but I fancy I can see him on his discreet mule, with his riding-cloak around him, toiling up the ascent at sober pace, and reading, perhaps, a small pocket volume, as his beast with regular steps clambers up the well-known steep. He is returning from Florence, tired with the ride and anxious to find himself in the repose of his own home. The gateway he is thus approaching

opens immediately on the brow of the hill—precipice, it might almost be called—and the entire walls stand similarly on the very edge of the steep descent, so that the little town occupies the whole of the table-land on the top of the hill. It contains, however, little more than one street, paved, after the invariable fashion of Tuscany, with flagstones. In this street two or three houses still retain the tower which once marked the residence of a patrician; and one of these is pointed out—any urchin in the street will serve as cicerone for the purpose—as the house of Boccaccio. It is the one single glory, boast, and source of interest which still remains to the town in the wreck of its fortunes, and is fully appreciated as such by its inhabitants. When a stranger is desirous of wending his slow way up from the railway station to the town, the old dame who keeps the key of ‘the house’ is summoned to be in readiness, for nobody imagines for a moment that any human being can come to Certaldo for any other purpose than to see Messer Giovanni’s house and burial-place. A poor little attempt at a café, the only place of public entertainment possessed by the town, is called the ‘Caffè di Boccaccio.’

The house, which had become the dwelling and magazine of a charcoal-dealer, was preserved from further degradation and destruction by the Marchesa Carlotta Lenzoni, who purchased it some quarter of a century ago, and caused it to be preserved in its primitive condition. Though ennobled by the possession of a tower, it is an exceedingly small dwelling. On the ground floor, immediately on the right hand of the entrance, is a small room, now wholly unfurnished and unfloored. This may have probably been the lodging of the bachelor poet’s one maidservant. But this room, the entrance, and the staircase occupy all the ground floor; and one good-sized room, some five-and-twenty feet long by twelve wide, constitutes the entire first floor. Above this, with the exception of the tower and miniature kitchen, there is nothing. In this room, the drawing-room, library, dining-room, and bed-room of the poet, the Marchesa Carlotta Lenzoni has established a little *Museum Boccaccianum*, consisting of all the ancient articles of furniture of the poet’s day which remained in the house, a little cabinet containing rare and early editions of his works, a specimen of his autograph, and some other memorials.

Here Messer Giovanni passed the last years of his life in tranquillity; and, though he was wont occasionally to sign himself ‘Giovanni da Certaldo, inimico della Fortuna,’ it must be supposed in tolerable contentment, since the kind entreaties of his much-loved Petrarch that he would come and live with him could not

induce him to leave his home among the Tuscan hills. Here is the description of Messer Giovanni as he appeared at this time, which Fillipo Villani has left us: 'The poet was somewhat stout in figure, but tall withal. His face was round, with a slight depression of the nose above the nostrils; the lips rather thick, but nevertheless handsome and well-shaped; a dimpled chin, which imparted much beauty to his smile. The expression of his face in speaking was ever jocund and cheerful—always pleasing, always benignant. He delighted much in conversation, and gained by his good qualities many friends—not one, however, who assisted him in his poverty.'

Yet Ser Giovanni preferred to brave Fortune's buffets, and to remain, as a kindred spirit has it, 'pauper in ære suo' in his own little freehold mansion in Certaldo. The truth is that our dear Ser Giovanni, genial and kindly as his nature was, was not without a dash of wayward pride, and was too fond of complete independence to live happily otherwise than under his own roof. Aretino says of him that he was 'tenero di natura e sdegnoso,' which, he adds, 'much injured his fortunes, inasmuch as he had nothing of his own; nor would he endure to live in dependence on signors or princes.' Sansovino gives him the same character, and adds that, 'judging his poverty riches enough, content with little, and much enamoured of liberty, he thus lived without any of the sorrows of dependence.' And we have little doubt that Messer Giovanni, however much 'inimico della Fortuna,' was far happier with his crust in his little home at Certaldo, among his own Tuscan hills, than poor Dante, who felt so bitterly the 'salt taste of another's bread and the toilsome mounting of stairs not his own.'¹

Messer Giovanni di Boccaccio died on December 20, 1375, in his sixty-third year, at Certaldo, and was buried there in the parish church, under a tombstone, which was removed in 1783 by the bigotry of the then incumbent of the parish, not in disaccord with the popular opinion and tradition still current in Certaldo that Messer Giovanni was a potent magician—as indeed he was.

¹ Some sentences of the above account of the house at Certaldo have been taken from a description of it published many years ago by the author in the *Athenæum*.

Frighted with False Fire.

BY D. CHRISTIE MURRAY.

I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play——

CHAPTER I.

IN the autumn of the year 1870 Professor Ottavio Villani threw his studies to the winds, and started for the Continent. The Professor was a young man who had given very remarkable proof of ability. He had already, at the age of thirty, grown famous among the medical men of London, and had earned both admiration and detraction. There were certain of the elders who called him a charlatan; but there were many who believed in him, and almost swore by him. Yet, however the Professor was admired, he had no skill to win any human creature's affection. Saturnine in aspect, morose in demeanour, and solitary in his tastes was the Professor. He was not handsome, and the knowledge of that fact galled him bitterly; for though he was in some respects very near being a great man, he was in some others a very small one. He was suspicious of all offers of friendship, and seemed more hurt by cordiality than most men are by coldness. The armour of reserve in which he wrapped himself was as much offensive as defensive. He had no friend in the world, so far as anybody in London knew. He had gone through the ordinary medical and surgical curriculum at his hospital without making so much as a civil casual acquaintance. The more refined of his compeers shrank from the loutish discourtesy of his manner, and he in turn rejected the boisterous amenities of the rougher set with dislike and scorn. The youngsters, his fellow-students, fell into an almost superstitious belief in his powers of reading; and he justified their disliking admiration by prodigious labours. His mind was "wax to receive, and marble to retain." He spent his nights and days in avid study, breaking now and then into fits of lonely and sullen dissipation. By degrees these fits grew less and less frequent and, as he grew to completer manhood, they ceased. Even his warmest enemies were fain to admit that he was a man of almost superhuman erudition; and these hated him therefore in proportion to their own smallness and his disdain.

The Professor lived in Danes Inn, and his chambers were in

the uppermost story. The grim outlook from his windows, which held nothing but chimney-pots, suited him. The occasional roars of bachelor jollity which floated through open windows in the summer time suited him also; for they formed food for his despire and dislike. He was a man who would scarcely have been comfortable if he could. He never grumbled audibly at anything, but loved to nurse all manner of little injuries and annoyances, rejoicing in his contemptuous hate of those who inflicted them.

Professor Ottavio Villani was, in short, as disagreeable and unlovely a man as one might meet in a summer day's walk any where.

For twelve years he had worked incessantly, and now he felt himself breaking down. It came to pass, therefore, to the surprise of all who knew him, that he gave up work suddenly and treated himself to a holiday. He was well-to-do, and could have afforded this at any time; but hitherto he had never even tried to resist that stale dæmon of his, which vexed him and harried him into study.

The graces of Nature were nothing to the Professor. The purple of a sunset distance, and the amber and crimson glory of the sky above it, awoke in his heart no gleam of responsive beauty. Before that ineffable spectacle his scientific instincts aroused themselves, and he dived deep into reflections about the prismatic rays and the power of the atmosphere for optic illusions. Filled with his own reflections, he walked up and down the deck of the vessel which bore him to Rotterdam, and neither knew nor cared that it carried another creature.

As the night fell the wind freshened, and the sea responded. The Professor became dreadfully unwell, but even sea-sickness could not stir him from his cold and scornful isolation. He suffered in lonely silence, and made no appeal even to the steward. Standing at the side of the vessel, as near amidships as he could find a place, and gazing with savage endurance at the whirling horizon, he felt a hand upon his shoulder, and heard a pleasant voice.

'Villani? I thought I knew you.'

The Professor looked up for a second, and recognised the speaker. Except for that glance he made no acknowledgment of his presence, but clutched the rail, and gave himself over, body and soul, to misery.

'Try this,' said the pleasant voice.

The Professor put the flask by with a peevish gesture of dislike and discomfort.

'Come, come,' said the pleasant voice. 'It's the best thing in the world.'

The Professor, finding the flask forced upon him, took it, and, with a small and vicious ill-temper, threw it overboard, and clung to the rail again. The owner of the pleasant voice looked at the Professor with something like anger. A moment later he laughed.

‘What an unhappy devil you must be, Villani, with such a temper!’

The Professor returned no answer, but clung to the rail, and watched the wheeling horizon. The universe seemed one huge rotary framework, of which he was the miserable centre. What made matters worse was that, while he rolled one way, that perverse universe rolled another. Stoic as he was, he could endure no longer, and he groaned.

‘I might have guessed,’ said his unwelcome companion, ‘how ill you were. Let me help you to one of the benches. Come! That’s right! Steady, there! Now, lie down here. Let me get the rug under your head, and tuck this well about you. There you are—as right as a trivet! Now you shall have a dose of brandy, and go to sleep. Steward!’

Sick as he was, the Professor resented the kindly hand that did him these friendly offices. He moved his head fretfully and feebly to avoid the glass that was held to his lips, but his companion would take no denial, and he was too weak and miserable to offer a long resistance. His comrade passed a strap about him to ensure him against falling off, threw another rug over him, and strolled away to smoke a pipe in the bows, where he watched the shadowy bowsprit dive and soar before him. Half humming a tune which came drowsily and nasally past his pipe, he sat there the night through. He made excursions now and again to the Professor, who preserved a sick and sulky silence and felt inwardly ashamed. He found him pretending sleep at last, replaced the topmost rug, tucked it gently behind him and under him, and so left him taut and tidy. Then he went back to the bows, and hummed and smoked till daybreak. When the people in the boat were astir again, he unpacked the Professor, who was much better, and a trifle more ill-tempered. With a blunt and aggravating good humour he catered for the comfort of the fractious creature he had taken in charge. He saw him to the breakfast-table and made him eat. He produced a bottle of champagne and made him drink, and declared that each thing he forced upon him was the best in the world for sea-sickness. To all these kindly acts and words Villani responded with a fretful air of injury, which affected him who offered them no more than lightning affects a conductor. The Italian’s whole being grated at this perpetual good temper and long forbear-

ance, and he endured them in a sort of silent rage. He became too aggravated at last to bear the other's presence longer, and walked hastily away from him.

John Harmer, barrister-at-law, sat down in the bows again, and smoked and hummed with quiet unostentatious cheerfulness. Villani, spurred by his own stale dæmon, looked at him now and again sourly, grudging his enjoyment of life and his handsome bearing and bright face. John Harmer, florid in complexion, tawny as to the beard, broad-chested, long-limbed, fresh, crisp, and healthy, and as cheerful as a linnet, looked now and again at the lean and haggard scientist and felt sorry for him, pitying his general ill-condition. The young Englishman had most things in his favour. He was one of the great army of the briefless, but he was wealthy, and his want of employment weighed lightly on his spirits. He had a splendid physique, a good heart, the digestion of an ostrich, and a temper distinguished by a calm and unshaken cheerfulness. He was going abroad to meet his sweetheart, and he was five-and-twenty.

Villani became a little more approachable by and by, and discarded a little of his ill-temper. But whatever topic was touched as he and John Harmer talked together, the Italian treated it with a bitter and grudging satire. Yet, as he talked, he became less and less offensive, and, though he continued pessimist all over, grew wonderfully interesting, and at last almost companionable. It was plainly to be seen that he was really ill—that his nerves were terribly irritated, and that his whole system was out of order. He was so yellow that one might have thought his veins ran bile. He stooped in his walk, and his black hair was already thickly streaked with grey. His majestic head was set on an insignificant figure; his chest was as narrow as his waist. 'If this man is unhappy and ill-tempered,' thought John Harmer, as he walked beside him, 'it isn't a great deal to be wondered at.'

As the Professor passed into his better mood, the hearty young fellow's good-nature and happiness softened him a little. The sea-breeze braced him, and a vague sense of holiday-making brought a hint of freshness to his spirit.

'I suppose,' said Harmer, as they walked the deck, 'that you are going on a visit to your friends?'

'No,' returned the other, falling into his old repellent manner at the question. 'I have no friends on the Continent.'

'What route do you take?' asked Harmer, ignoring his companion's change of manner.

'I have no plans,' the other answered, and turned to the side of the vessel.

'Look here, then,' said the younger man, in his own hearty fashion, 'join with us.' He could read the other's refusal, and went on in a tone of friendly appeal: 'We are going to be a quiet party. You can have things your own way when you want them so, and can make our ways yours when it pleases you. You will find it but a dreary holiday if you ramble about alone.'

The Italian turned round and looked at him, but returned no answer.

'Come,' resumed Harmer; 'you have worked too hard, and these lonely ways are good for nobody. Come and breathe a little social air and get the scholarly dust out of your lungs. Say you will come.'

The Professor looked round again, withdrawing his eyes slowly from the distance and fixing them full on those of his companion.

'I am not a social man,' he said, speaking reluctantly and slowly; 'I am not used to society, and I am better alone.'

'Nonsense,' said Harmer, 'we shall send you back to London another man.'

The Professor shrugged his shoulders wearily, and turned away with so definite an aspect of refusal that any other man in the world would have felt himself insulted. But it was not easy to insult John Harmer. He turned with Villani and took forcible possession of him. Drawing the Italian's arm through his, he went on:

'I'm sure you'll get more good out of your holiday by joining us than by going about alone. Say you will come.'

Villani was annoyed, but he was also, in spite of himself, a little touched. He made a fainter resistance.

'I shall be in your way,' he said.

'Not at all, my dear fellow, I assure you. Now, do let me persuade you. We will do everything we can to make you comfortable. And really, now, you know,' said Harmer, facing round upon him, 'you're not well. You're very far from well. You have no right to travel about alone.'

This friendly solicitude began to be pleasant to the friendless man. It flattered his vanity, and fed his sense of his own importance.

'Will you come?' said Harmer persuasively, with a hand upon his companion's shoulder.

'Yes,' said the Professor, looking across the waters; 'I will come.'

John Harmer became wonderfully interested in the Professor. He had known him for years in a casual sort of way, but had never exchanged a half-hour's talk with him before. He found him full

of curiosity and interest, a brilliant talker, too cold and hard everywhere, but brilliant, dazzling, full of erratic fancies and strange psychological theories. He advanced these theories boldly and even eagerly, despite his natural reticence.

'I say, Villani,' said his listener suddenly, 'you're another man already.'

The Professor looked at him darkly for a second or two, and then answered, with a stiff assumption of gaiety,

'Yes, I am another man already.'

'You men of genius, you know,' said Harmer, 'sometimes get into bad habits. You study too closely: you make your lives too solitary: you get into an evil habit of ignoring your fellow-creatures. Don't you think so?'

'I know nothing,' said Villani, with a laugh which on any other man's face would have been a sneer—his highest expression of good-humour—'I know nothing of your men of genius and their ways. But I—I have worked too hard. I have been too solitary. But I am coming from my shell already.'

'It strikes me,' said Harmer, 'that we shall have a jolly time of it.'

'Oh, yes,' returned Villani, with the same clumsy cheerfulness; 'we will have a jolly time.'

The Professor had eaten a fairly good dinner that evening, and had shared a bottle of wine. His sea-sickness was over, and he began to feel a strange and unaccustomed glow of geniality.

'Look here,' said Harmer, 'let us two be friends. I'll look you up in town, and you'll look me up, and I'll fetch you out of that den of yours now and then. Eh? What do you say? Shall we be friends?'

'I have never made friends, anywhere,' said Villani, half wistfully, half bitterly.

'Then,' said Harmer, wheeling round upon him, and laying a hand upon each of his shoulders, 'begin with me.'

The Professor was fairly taken by storm and capitulated.

'Yes,' he answered, stretching out both his hands. John Harmer removed his grasp from the Professor's shoulders, and took the offered hands.

'Very well,' he said cheerily, 'that is a bargain.'

CHAPTER II.

WHEN the Professor awoke next morning he found himself ready to despise his mood of yesterday and to make recantation of his promises of friendship. What had he and this Englishman in common?

he asked himself. 'He will look me up,' he said to himself sulkily, 'and drag me out of my den. So he is graciously pleased to promise. I have cured one or two men of that sort of fancy, and I shall cure him. I have promised to join his friends, but I have not promised to accompany them. I will join them, and leave them, and then go my own way.'

But when he met the young barrister again he found his own reticent ill-humour once more subdued. The same ground was gone over. The young man's perfect contentment and happiness jarred upon him, and made him envious afresh. But the impossible task of ruffling the young fellow's temper having once been essayed, the Professor succumbed anew, and by the time the slow-going packet had reached its destination he found himself actually laying plans for John Harmer's party. When he realised the change which seemed to be taking place within him, he was amazed. He had never been properly approached before this, somehow. But John Harmer had found the key to his heart, and to him it opened as wide a door as it could on so short a notice. The poor, clever, scholarly little cynic felt even the dawning beams of friendship to be gracious. He had never conceived the possibility of anyone caring for him before. His tender vanity and his sturdy egotism had alike taken arms against all the world. He had been so lonely and so scornful that to discover some one whom he did not actively dislike was a comfort to him, and a pleasant wonder. He began to think whether he was capable of friendship, and brought in a verdict against himself. Another half-dozen years of such a life as he had led, and his case would have been hopeless. But a real friendship began to grow in the stony soil his heart offered. It was a poor little plant, and destined to be terribly buffeted, but he gave it room and nourishment.

Harmer insisted that the Professor should join his company at once, and bore him, bag and baggage, to the hotel at which the meeting was arranged to take place. The young fellow was uncommonly light-hearted that morning, as was natural. But it needed all his cheerfulness to bear the news which awaited him. A letter lay at the hotel, despatched, so it turned out, two days before his departure from England. He was called imperatively home. The business on which he was summoned would not wait, and so he went ruefully on board the returning packet, and ruefully bade Villani good-bye. In ten days at the outside he promised to rejoin him, and left in his hands a brief note of introduction to the friend who headed the holiday party he had hoped to meet.

'I will join them when you join them,' said Villani. 'I will meet you here on your return.'



'THE CHILD STRETCHED OUT HER HAND FOR THE FLOWER'

'No,' pleaded Harmer, 'I haven't time to write another line. Do at least see them, and explain. Tell them I will follow as soon as I can. There's the bell for the start. Good-bye.'

With that he rushed on board, and from the deck renewed his entreaties to Villani on the quay.

'You will do that, old man,' so he besought him, 'won't you, now?'

'I will do it,' said Villani, and took pity on the rueful young face, lately so bright; and went away wondering at himself.

John Harmer's friends were a day or two late. Villani waited in Rotterdam and rambled about its streets, and hung over its bridges, and watched its markets, and loitered on the quays with one topic pretty generally in his mind. That topic was John Harmer's offer of friendship. The more he looked at it and thought of it, the more he liked it. For one thing the man's egotism was gigantic, and this offer fed it. But there were many better ingredients than gratified vanity in the feeling with which he thought of his late companion. Little gusts of tenderness touched him at moments, and were inexpressibly sweet to him. He found traces of humanity within himself which reconciled him with his own soul, and partly with the world.

On the morning of the third day of his sojourn in Rotterdam he picked up a flower in the market-place. He carried it with him as he walked, looking at it with the eye of a scientific botanist, and without the faintest sense of any beauty in it. Standing still for a moment in the intentness of his examination he felt a touch upon his coat. He looked down and saw a tiny little Dutch damsel with dirty chubby cheeks and big blue eyes, and soft untidy flaxen hair blown about by the wind. The child stretched out her hand for the flower with such perfect confidence in the success of her appeal that he gave it to her as a matter of course, and actually stooped and patted the rough little flaxen head. The tiny damsel dropped a quaint little courtesy, and went off with the flower. His eyes followed her with pleased interest. As he turned away, he saw a young lady, who smiled at the incident with womanly satisfaction. The young lady held the arm of a white-headed old gentleman, of whom the Professor remained unconscious.

He walked about for an hour or two, and that smile haunted him. It seemed impalpably present in the light about him, and enwove him in a mesh of sunbeams. As he walked on the quay it shimmered softly in the sunlit dancing water. His thoughts dwelt, pleased, on innocent things, forgotten long ago, and now freshly called to mind and sweetly wondered at. He moved in a new atmosphere, trod the soil of a new world. He thought of the child

who had silently begged that stray blossom, and was surprised that no child had ever charmed him before. A phrase he had heard somewhere made a refrain in his mind—'Sweets to the sweet: farewell.' There was a little gentle sadness in the 'farewell;' he knew not why and cared not wherefore. Vague delicate fancies bloomed for him everywhere, and over them all, like the moon on a fairy landscape, brooded the smile he had seen.

When he returned to the hotel, a waiter informed him that the expected party had arrived. He sent in John Harmer's note of introduction, and a few minutes later a white-headed genial-looking old gentleman came into the room and welcomed him.

'My name is Malden,' said the old gentleman; 'I am heartily glad, Professor Villani, to welcome you to our small circle. Pray join us at once.'

The old gentleman with busy cordiality motioned the Professor into the next room, and kept up by the way a continuous murmur of welcome. The influences of the morning and of the absent John Harmer were on the Professor still, and so cheered and warmed him that he went through the process of introduction without pain. This negative comfort brightened when the smile he had encountered in the street met him here again.

'My daughter Mary,' said the old gentleman. 'A friend of John's, my dear—Professor Villani.'

The young lady extended her hand and accepted the Professor with a winning cordiality. She was very graceful in figure, and very sweet and attractive in manner. Her smile seemed to the Professor ineffably beautiful. Of women in true womanly aspect this solitary student knew absolutely nothing. Of love he knew absolutely nothing. It is probable that he had never so much as thought of its possibilities as affecting himself. Love came upon him unrecognised, and bound him hand and foot and soul and body, and he meanwhile knew nothing of it. It touched him like delicate music—it surrounded him like warm sunlight—it stole upon his senses like a swift and sweet and pungent odour. It came as a transfiguration of the soul. The Professor entered his true atmosphere. The genius that was within him expanded and burst into kindly blossom. His moroseness of manner vanished, and his shyness went with it. His impatience of contradiction and his little vanities were as far away as if they had never existed. He was as completely transformed as Teufelsdröckh in the presence of Blumine. He talked, and his tongue was loosened. He had always been brilliant, and his lectures had for three years been the talk of scientific London. But now he found heart as well as brain, and whatever topic was touched upon he decked with the wealth

of his learning and the grace of his fancy. The people to whom John Harmer had introduced him were all charmed with him. They had heard of him from afar, and felt the honour of his fame reflected upon them by his presence. They allowed him to see this, and it was grateful to him. The icy crust which had hitherto covered him melted away before the social warmth of these new friends and the gladness of his own heart. There he sat, the pedant and the cynic of the day before yesterday, playing gracefully and gently with a thousand poetic fancies. Whenever he paused they woke him up again, and he flowed on afresh. There was probably no man in Europe that day who could have rivalled his talk. He crowded Science with an interest to which Romance was strange, and rose daringly to sublime speculations.

His hearers sat entranced.

The Professor retired to his room, but not to rest; he was too excited to sleep, and too happy to dream of wasting his time in any such ridiculous fashion. He was an inordinate smoker, and with his pipe between his lips he marched up and down the room. The tall wax candles on either side of his mirror guttered down in the soft warm air that came through the open window. He began to undress, and, as he did so, caught sight of the reflection of his face in the looking-glass. No inward change which had come upon him had surprised him half so much as the outward change he saw there. His face was positively handsome. His eyes sparkled, his cheeks were alight with clear colour, his whole countenance was lofty and radiant in expression. He placed his elbows on the table and regarded himself steadily; as he did so the inevitable change came about. The habitual look of cynical distrust obscured the candid question of his eyes. His brow clouded, and his mouth fell into its old peevish lines.

He leaned there regarding his own darkened face until the candles went out, and even then regarded it in fancy, passing through dark ways of thought meanwhile. It was grey dawn when he moved away, and he could just dimly see through the black gleam of the mirror a ghostly presentment of himself. He nodded at that ghostly presentment and turned away.

'I will say nothing yet,' the Professor said to himself as he tossed restlessly in bed. 'I will wait and see.'

He lay awake until morning, and arose pale and tired; his companions saw his prostration, and were profuse in their attentions. He accepted all they did and said as he had never been able to accept kindness before. What with his old fatigues and his new excitements, he grew feverish, and had to be nursed and petted a good deal. A total change came upon him, and shone so distinctly

in his face that, when John Harmer joined the party at Brussels, he was startled by it. But before John Harmer came the mischief which had done this good was wrought beyond all possibility of recall, and Ottavio Villani was hopelessly and passionately in love with John Harmer's sweetheart.

He could not have helped it even had he tried. He had never experienced the boyish attachments that nearly all men have known as the precursor of that final love which brings bliss or bale. He did not recognise the passion when it came upon him; he only knew that his life was suddenly made sweet to him, and that the bitter world had grown gracious. He thought of John Harmer in this revolution with a thankful devotedness which would have been impossible to him a fortnight before. John was the first creature who had laid a kindly hand on him since he could remember. There were tears in his eyes once, as he called to mind the gentle fashion in which the young man had placed the wrappings about him while he was sick on board the steamer. He longed to hear the genial young fellow's pleasant voice again, and see his pleasant face. John Harmer came in due course, and the first thing Villani saw of him was, that he placed his arm round Mary's waist and kissed her. That sight was gall and wormwood to the Professor. But worse to find that John absolutely monopolised her, and held himself her accredited proprietor. The Professor watched the pair narrowly whenever he had a chance, and groaned inwardly when he saw with what a pleased complacency her eye rested on her lover. That genial youngster took her love as a thing of course—so it seemed to the Professor's jealous eye. 'He does not know how to value her,' he said to himself, now that his eyes were opened to his own condition. 'He is cold and phlegmatic, like his race,' he would say; 'he offers friendship, and she takes it for love. I love her!' so he passionately repeated to himself. 'I love her! I love her! She could take me in her hand and re-create me, and do what she would with me. Why could I not keep my spites and miseries wrapped about my heart? They would have saved me from this. I have seen heaven, and now I am bidden to walk into hell!' So he raved inwardly, with the saturnine brows drawn down, and the saturnine lips compressed, and the black eyes glowing like black fire. 'I love you! I love you! I love you!' he cried. 'I worship you! I love you! I would die for you! My goddess! My queen!'

He buried all this passion within him fathom-deep, and it burned and fretted until he grew to a skeleton. His face became sharp and attenuated and his stoop increased. His great coal-black eyes gleamed like lamps in darkness, under his gloomy brows.

He fought a perpetual fight with all the powers of evil in his own nature. Tempests of hate and jealousy raged through him, but those about him heard no whisper of the storm. He would go away from everybody and sit alone, with his head between his hands, and fight his savage battle in perfect quiet. Mary found him in this attitude one day, and asked if he were ill. He lifted so white a face that she was frightened.

'Are you in pain?' she asked him tenderly.

His face was grey, and his eyes were filmy with anguish.

'Yes,' he answered, 'I am in pain—in pain—in pain!'

He looked at her with a despairing intensity which frightened her still more, and moved his head slowly from side to side, with so wild a look of suffering that for the moment she thought him mad.

'These dreadful headaches,' said the Professor, rising, with a most pitiable smile, 'will be my ruin some day.' He had quite regained his self-possession, and he saw clearly that he must go away at once. 'I am not well enough to travel for enjoyment,' he said; 'I shall remain behind—here; and shall rest.'

It was arranged so that night, to the great regret of the whole party. In the morning they went away with kind farewells, and left the Professor to himself. He lingered in the quiet Rhineside village a week, and then returned to London, apparently unchanged; dark, saturnine, and reticent as ever. He had discovered and had done great things, but he hid them in his heart.

CHAPTER III.

It was winter-time, and the rain was falling drearily and heavily. The Professor was seated by the fire, smoking and staring at the pattern on the wall. He heard a key fumble at the lock of the door outside and then a tap at the door of the room in which he sat. 'Come in,' said the Professor, and the charwoman entered.

'Please, sir,' said the charwoman, 'might I ask as you'd do me the favour to lend me some coals? 'Cause Mr. 'Armer's coming back this evening, and he ain't got none.'

'Who is coming back?' asked the Professor.

'Mr. 'Armer, sir, what had the chambers oppo-site, sir.'

The Professor turned away and looked at the fire. The woman waited for a time and then renewed her request.

'May I take the coals, sir?'

'Certainly, certainly,' he answered, starting. 'Anything you like.'

The woman thanked him, and went away. She closed the inner door, and pulled the outer door after her, but failed to latch it. A minute later, a keen draught of air drove it swinging back against the wall, but the Professor was so deep in thought that he did not hear it. He sat staring at the pattern on the wall, and thinking, thinking. Sleepless nights and feverish days, and passionate love, half stifled by passionate study, had worn him to a shadow. He found his memory fail him strangely at times, so that what was done or said a week ago seemed to have been said or done yesterday, and all the interval to be blank and void. He felt so utterly tired and weary now that he resolved to obtain unconsciousness for a time, and so give body and soul a little of the rest they needed. He rose and took from a bureau a little phial filled with some dark-coloured liquid. He poured a small quantity of this into a wine-glass half-filled with water, measuring it with extreme care, and, having replaced the phial, he tossed off the contents of the glass and sat down and filled his pipe. In a little while the opiate took effect. The pipe fell from his lips, and his hands dropped listlessly over the arms of the chair on either side.

When he awoke, the fire had died out, and the cold struck to the very marrow of his bones. One burner in the chandelier was dimly alight, and by its flame he saw a figure standing in the doorway.

‘Who is there?’ he cried sharply, springing to his feet.

‘All right, old man,’ answered John Harmer’s voice, with cheery accent. ‘How cold and dark you are here! Come over to my rooms: I have a roaring fire there, and things are generally jolly.’

The Professor rose and followed. They had but to cross a stone landing to reach the snugly-furnished chamber, aglow with warmth and light. The Professor was dazed with recent sleep, and winked drowsily in the light. Harmer thrust him into a comfortable seat, closed the door, heaped more coals upon the fire, and placed decanters upon the table, talking merrily all the while. A sudden black hatred welled up in the Professor’s heart, and for the moment he felt murderous. ‘Why should this man affront me with his happiness? Why should he flaunt himself before me so gaily, who is the only bar to hopes I dare not dream of?’ So the Professor thought darkly as he sat and only half heard the gay talk of his companion.

‘But you are out of sorts,’ said Harmer. ‘You look ill.’ He laid a hand upon the Professor’s shoulder.

The touch smote the Italian like a reproach. He shook it off peevishly, and felt that his thoughts were guilty.

'Come, come!' said Harmer kindly, 'you must remember our promise, Villani. You look worn to death, old man.'

'Yes?' asked the Professor, trying to smile, and feeling that he succeeded but poorly. 'I am growing old, Harmer.'

John laughed, and poured out a glass of wine.

'Try the fountain of youth,' he said lightly. But he looked at the Professor with kindly eyes that smote his evil thoughts anew. There was a whisper in Villani's mind that seemed almost like a whisper at his ear: 'Would it profit me if the man were dead?' But through all the evil of his thoughts, there was in his mind an inexplicable tenderness for the man. He felt that he loved him and hated him at once—loved him for himself, and hated him that he was in the way.

'You are working too hard again,' said Harmer. 'You must resign your professorship for a time and take complete rest. You will kill yourself if you go on in this way.'

'Why not?' the other answered, sick at heart.

'Come, come!' said Harmer again, with a friendly hand once more upon Villani's shoulder.

The Professor would not meet his companion's eye, and made the first motion which occurred to him to avoid it. He took out his watch mechanically, but, seeing the time, started to his feet.

'I shall be late,' he said. 'I have to lecture to-night at the hospital, and I must go at once. Good-night.'

'Let me come with you,' said Harmer. 'I have nowhere to go and nothing to do to-night, and it will be a treat to me to hear you.'

'If you care for it,' said the Professor, muffling himself as he spoke.

They went through the wet and gleaming streets together arm-in-arm. The Professor's mind was quite dim until he found himself in the lecture theatre. Harmer sat just in front of him. The place was crowded, and it was already a minute or two beyond the time. He plunged into the midst of his subject, and lost himself and his own cares in it, as he was always able to do. He was describing an operation performed upon a frog; and opened with a defence of vivisection from the charge of inhumanity. He dealt with the question animatedly and satirically, and drew forth frequent laughter and applause. These signs were almost unknown at the deliverances of other professors in the College, but were frequent at Villani's.

Having set aside the opening question, he took up the actual

matter of his lecture. The main threads of it were these. It was a vulgar belief, as his hearers knew, that a separation of the tissues of the brain was fatal. The brain could be sharply and clearly divided without danger to life. These severances altered the manifestations of life and destroyed the powers whose seat lay in the parts which were eliminated. Thus—sever the brain from the vertebral cord below the optic lobes, and the power of sight vanishes; sever it above the optic lobes, and the power of sight remains. In the case he dealt with, an incision had been made. The seat of such higher faculties as the frog possessed was cut clean away from the spinal cord. Result: the frog became a mere automaton, a machine imbued with the principle of life. It could see, but without apprehension of that it saw. Touched with acid, it demonstrated feeling by uneasy motions. Placed in water, it swam mechanically to land, but went no farther. Having food pressed upon it, it could eat; but it had no wit left to know that it needed food, or to go in search of it. Frog reduced in short to mere mechanical frog; motiveless, automatic; a frog of reflex action pure and simple. Deduced from all this—eloquent thunder against materialism, and argument to show that the mere life-principle is utterly apart from mind, and even from instinct.

The Professor remarked that John Harmer listened with an air of intense interest to this discourse. Harmer commented on it, when they had left the theatre, and asked many questions concerning it. Villani answered them all indifferently.

‘Could that experiment be performed on a man?’ asked Harmer suddenly.

They were at that moment underneath the gas-lamp at the gate of the Inn. The Professor turned upon his companion with a gesture which brought them both to a standstill.

‘Yes,’ he answered; and they walked up the Inn side by side.

‘I suppose the operation would be much more difficult?’ John asked a moment later.

‘A man’s brain is more difficult of approach than a frog’s,’ the Professor answered. A great horror of himself was settling down upon him. Awful voices whispered to him and tempted him. He knew nothing but this horror until he found himself in Harmer’s room, seated at the fireside.

‘It seems to open up,’ John was saying, ‘quite a new sphere of possible crime. Ghastly notion, isn’t it? Would it be possible to do it in such a way as to leave a man such a mindless machine as you described, and yet escape detection?’

‘Yes,’ said the Professor in answer. ‘By the use of a peculiar instrument.’

It sounded to him as though some other spoke the words, and he stood by and listened.

‘Is there such an instrument?’ Harmer asked again.

‘I have an instrument,’ so the Professor seemed to hear his own voice say, whilst he stood by and listened, ‘made for another purpose long ago, which could be turned to this.’

The pulses beat so in his downcast eyes that everything he looked upon was red, as if with blood. Why would the man tempt him so horribly?

‘Would you mind letting me see it?’ said Harmer. ‘Tell me how it could be done.’

His own voice sounded again in the Professor’s ear.

‘You may see it if you like. I will fetch it.’

The walls and the roof were red when he arose, and dared to cast his eyes about him. The globe of the lamp was red, like blood fresh spilled. There was a red glow in the darkness of his own room as he entered it. He laid his hand upon the case in which he knew the instrument lay, and returned with it. Harmer examined it, and asked questions about it, and seemed quite morbidly interested in it.

The surging horror rose higher and higher, and sounded with noises of the sea, and throbbed with alternate beats of darkness and red light.

‘But you are ill again,’ said Harmer, with the kindly hand once more laid lightly on his arm. ‘I weary you.’

The surging tide of horror took to itself a hundred whispering voices. Pallid, awful faces flashed from it, and disappeared in it; and from dreadful lips that came and vanished rose floating murmurs like noises of the sea, all urging him to do the deed, and free himself, and be happy. He knew that they were the voices of perdition, and that their promise of happiness was a lie as deep as hell. He answered so in his own heart; but they all whispered, ‘Get the deed done!’

He could not withstand their awful bidding.

‘Excuse me for a moment,’ he heard his own voice say. ‘I am unwell. I will return in a minute.’

He crossed the stone landing, and entered his own room and closed the door. Then he struck a light, hunted in a cabinet, and found a phial. Then he took a decanter and poured into it the contents of the phial, examining the wine against the light afterwards and ascertaining that its colour was unaltered. Next,

returning the phial to its place in the cabinet, he recrossed the stone landing, and again entered his friend's room.

'There,' he said, in a voice which had no quiver of excitement in it, 'is a medicine which never fails to set me on my feet.'

'Ah,' said Harmer; 'what is it?'

'It is '34 port,' said the Professor. 'Try a glass with me.'

He filled for himself first, with a steady hand; then for his friend.

'A toast,' he said, holding a glass in each hand. 'Mary Malden! May she be happy, and her husband blessed with her most constant love!'

'Amen to that sweet prayer!' said John, reaching out his hand for the glass. 'Thank you, dear old fellow—thank you!'

'Now,' said the Professor, in that dreadful voice which seemed to him to be outside him and apart from his own will while it spoke his thoughts, 'a race to the bottom!'

With that he set one glass in John Harmer's hands, and raised the other to his own lips. It went no farther. He watched; and in the horrible red light which filled the room, he saw John Harmer gulp the liquor down, and then his own glass fell from his hand, and shivered at his feet. He saw Harmer make a motion with his lips as if the taste of the wine surprised him and displeased him. Then, when Harmer raised his eyes at the sound of the fallen glass, Villani saw that his victim read, or partly read, his purpose.

'What have you done?' cried Harmer, falling upon him. 'What horror is this that fills your face?'

'I am mad,' shrieked the Professor. 'Why did you tempt me till I passed my strength? You are falling asleep already, and will awaken soulless, heartless, without memory. I love her—do you hear? I love her!'

Then suddenly he flung himself upon his face and grovelled on the floor.

'Kill me,' he cried, 'before sleep overcomes you. Save yourself.'

He heard the one word 'Traitor!' That was all. He looked up and saw the young man swaying to and fro. Then the rolling figure slipped suddenly into the chair from which the sentient man had risen.

Villani arose, and looked upon him. The whispering voices were at his ear again. 'There is no withdrawal now. Go on! Go on! Go on! Go on!'

Then a cold blindness came upon him, and he had no actual memory of the awful deed. But he knew that he had done it, and

that it was past recall. The place was so horribly still that the ceasing of the inward voices which had prompted him seemed like a gap in nature. They were all silent for a time, but the sea of horror had risen overhead, and he was drowning in it.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER this, strange blanks began to appear in the Professor's life, so that he seemed rather to leap from stage to stage of existence than to live through consecutive days. He knew how dreadfully his memory failed him, and was fully persuaded within himself that he was mad.

The first of these gaps in memory occurred between the commission of his crime and the awaking of his victim. Between those two events he was conscious of absolutely nothing but one tremendous outburst of remorse and horror. After those raging moments came a cloud which hid everything.

He was standing at the side of his victim's chair, with his hand upon the shoulder of the only man with whom he had ever exchanged even the faintest promises of friendship. He thought, with a curious kind of helpless self-pity, that he might have grown to love this man, and to be more than reconciled to his own sorrows. Perhaps remorse had for the moment worn itself out. It is certain that for the time his only feeling was one of altogether hopeless longing. His hand was on the shoulder of that cunningly-arranged machine which had been John Harmer, and he was kneeling beside the chair in which the helpless figure sat. So long as the Automaton's eyes were closed, the face revealed no change. But when, in obedience to the touch of the Professor's hand, the eyelids raised themselves and the eyes looked out upon him, their absolute vacuity struck him with an almost unbearable dread. No eyes of fate ever looked such awful accusation as those vacant and unrecognising orbs.

The Professor mastered his terror, and proceeded to examine into the effects of the operation. The Automaton sat in the exact attitude in which it had been aroused from sleep. Villani took one of the fingers of the left hand, and pinched it slightly. The right hand came across to brush away the cause of pain. This action aroused the figure, which, cramped by remaining the whole night in one posture in its opiate sleep, sat up, and yawned, and stretched itself, and then slid back and settled itself into a comfortable position. The Professor passed his hand rapidly before the vacant eyes. The eyelids flickered. Sight remained unimpaired.

Villani crossed the room and stood at some distance from the

arm-chair. He tried once or twice to speak, but his tongue refused to shape the word he wished to utter. At last the power of speech returned, and he called the Automaton by what had been its name. The head turned, and the eyes looked in the direction of the sound—with absolute vacancy, and with no comprehension of its meaning. A curiosity which he felt to be more dreadful than the feeling which had led him to the commission of the crime began to animate the Professor. He felt as though, in a dream, he were compelled to carry out a scientific inquiry into the results of his own unspeakable wickedness. The whole fearful business was resolving itself against his will into an experiment.

There are no words in any language spoken by men which can do more than hint the horror in which Villani lived perpetually. He had so far recovered himself, and so far mastered his own fears, that he was able to seek out Mr. Malden, and to tell him that some unimaginable misfortune had befallen John Harmer. The old gentleman had been to visit him, and at the Professor's request had called in two physicians, who could make nothing of the case except that Harmer had fallen into a condition of hopeless imbecility. Villani's remorse had never burned so fiercely within him as when he heard this verdict repeated to Mary. He would have thrown his own soul into the gulf for ever to have been able to undo the past. But that was nothing, and is saying nothing; for he suffered whatever agony he was capable of already, and could see no end for it, even in the grave. Yet he never relaxed the purpose for which he had brought all this upon himself, and he bent all the energies of his mind to win the stake he played for.

And at last he won it—in its outward form. The happiness of it, and the good of it, and the sweet peace of it, were just as far away as heaven from hell. But Mary Malden, after a year and a half of waiting, had promised to be his wife. The tender care with which he watched and tended the soulless body of her lover touched her nearly. Villani's profound unhappiness, which he persuaded her had sprung from his own hopeless love, touched her also. So, though he knew her heart was unweaned from its old allegiance, and though he knew that she had promised mainly that she might help him to nurse the victim of his infamy, he accepted the promise, and they were to be married.

It was, of course, in the nature of things that this should add to his punishment. It did so for a time, and therefore helped to bring about the inevitable reaction. The spirit can bear no more than the body a perpetual pain. Agony is an anodyne. Villani's perceptions of pain became numbed, and the dream-like feeling

with which all things had been invested since the beginning of his temptation grew in strength, and annulled his fears and his remorse. Total despair is fearless. It can encounter nothing that is not better than itself, and therefore it has nothing to fear.

So when detection, which is the ever-near damnation of the common criminal, approached the Professor, it brought no added dread. No amazement of shame, no horror of exposure, could wound him further. Had fate by some swift stroke cloven his soul in twain, he would not have felt it.

There was a beery and bloated captain resident in the Inn, who had left the army, as the rumour ran, under disreputable auspices. John Harmer had known him slightly, and had been courteous to him, in the native kindness of his heart, as few men were. It had never been a matter of surprise that the bloated and beery captain should inquire frequently—as he did—about Harmer's state of health, and ask what hope there was of his recovery. It was not a matter of surprise, when, in answer to Mr. Malden's entreaties, the Professor had brought John Harmer to the old gentleman's house at Putney, that the captain should have introduced himself there, and should call twice or thrice a week to pursue his friendly inquiries. The projected marriage was near at hand, when, after one of those strange lapses in memory which had now grown so frequent, the Professor found himself alone with John Harmer's automatic body and the captain. He found himself thinking that he had noticed in the cashiered warrior's demeanour a certain unwarranted insolence which called for a check of some kind, when the man came across the room and laid an insolent hand upon his shoulder.

All things had grown now to be like a part of a hideous nightmare which he could watch almost contentedly. Villani waited therefore for what might come, reading a braggart triumph in the face before him, and not caring what new terror the triumph might proclaim.

It was less like listening to a speech as he sat there than dreaming that he had heard such a speech a long, long time ago, and recalled it to memory now. He had no distinct knowledge of the words in which the news came. He knew it had come, and was not surprised, or grieved, or anyway affected. The world was empty and he was empty; that was all.

But the gist of what the captain had to say was this. That on a certain night—a year and a half ago—he was sitting in his chambers with the windows open. It was a queer time of the year for that sort of thing, but the captain had not been quite sober when he came home, and had only just awakened from a

drunken sleep. The windows opposite were those of Professor Villani, and one of them was open also. They were dark until the Professor entered the room, and struck a light. Then the captain, newly awakened from his drunken sleep, saw the Professor pour the contents of a little phial into a decanter, and saw him examine the decanter curiously afterwards. He had his suspicions at the time, and thought of cards, when he saw the Professor put out the gas, and heard shortly afterwards excited voices from Harmer's rooms. When he heard of Harmer's imbecility, he put two and two together, so he said, and summed them up against the Professor. He had puzzled his head about the matter ever since, but to no avail, until yesterday, when he found a copy of an old newspaper which related the substance of Villani's lecture before a scientific institute two years ago, in which the phenomena of the vivisected frog were dealt with. He had brought into his calculations then the Professor's approaching marriage, and was of opinion that he held a clue that, if he followed it, would lead to the exposure of a tremendous crime. And now, he wished particularly to know what Villani would give him to bury his surmises quietly and go about his business.

'Nothing,' said Villani.

But as he turned to say it, he saw, standing at the door, a bowed figure, and knew that the game on which he had staked his soul was played out and was lost. In another moment the bowed figure was erect and before him, and in another was weeping on John Harmer's neck with passionate sobs that shook it from head to foot.

He felt dead and careless. 'This,' he thought, 'must be the prelude to annihilation.' The weight of his despair pressed down upon him—crushing him, even with a physical sense of its burden, until the pain of its weight became too much for him, and he struggled to release himself. A cloud fell upon him, and he could see nothing and could hear nothing except one awful step which came nearer and nearer at dreadful intervals, each of which seemed like a hundred years. A hand was laid upon his shoulder, and as it touched him the burden fell away, the cloud dispersed, and he saw beside him the old friendly face, untouched, unchanged; and before him the face of the woman he loved, untouched, unchanged.

The Professor gave one wild cry:

'A dream! A dream! Thank God, a dream!'

Mary Malden and John Harmer ran about the Professor's room to find remedies for him, and brought him back to consciousness. The little Italian cried with joy when he returned to himself, and

actually knelt to kiss John Harmer's hands, and fawned upon him like an affectionate dog. They were astounded at all this until he said with tears :

'I had dreamt that I had hated you, and had murdered you. I lived for years in that dream. It was so horribly real that I never doubted it. I have suffered eternities of remorse and horror. But it was false, my friend ; it was false—all—all ! I have never hated you, but have loved you always—always, since that day on the boat.'

And what with his weakness, and his joy, and the enormous revulsion of emotion, he grew hysterical, and had to be nursed for an hour or two.

He never said anything more about his dream ; and they, seeing how it pained him, forbore to make allusion to it. But it wrought a vast change in him, and I do not think that any best man ever officiated at a wedding with a cleaner heart than Ottavio Villani at the ceremony which crowned John Harmer's hopes.

Henry Schliemann.

BY KATE FIELD.

A CHILD'S first impressions remain for life, and Henry Schliemann may fairly claim that his pickaxe and shovel were both forged and sharpened in the little village of Ankershagen in Mecklenburg, where he was born in 1822, and where he passed his early youth. His father, a Lutheran clergyman, made the discoveries of Pompeii and Herculaneum frequent subjects of conversation, and almost daily recited verses from Voss's German translation of 'Homer,' inspiring young Schliemann with enthusiasm for the exploits of Hector, Achilles, Agamemnon, and other heroes of the divine tragedy. The father's assurance that Troy had entirely disappeared, filled the son with regret. Fancy, then, his sensations when, at seven years of age, he received a Christmas present of Jerror's 'Universal History,' containing a fantastic picture of burning Troy, with its huge walls, and its lofty Scæan gate, from which emerged Æneas, carrying Anchises on his back and leading Ascanius by the hand! From that moment young Schliemann disbelieved in Troy's annihilation. In vain did his father assert that not one stone of Ilium's walls remained on the ancient site. The boy retorted that the houses might be partly destroyed, but the huge walls could not be—that the latter were covered with the ruins and dust of ages, and that he would dig them out!

On his mother's death, which occurred when Schliemann was nine years old, the boy went to live with an uncle, a clergyman of Kalkhorst. Here he remained two years. At ten he wrote for his father in bad Latin a description of the Trojan war, and was sent to a school at Neustrelitz; but at fourteen his studious aspirations were cruelly crushed. Schliemann père lost his parish, became miserably poor, and could no longer pay for his son's schooling. Apprenticed to a small grocer in the little town of Fürstenberg, Schliemann *filis* for five years and a half retailed herrings, butter, and the like, coming into perpetual contact with the lowest grades of society, and forgetting the little book knowledge he had previously acquired. In the fifth year, his salary amounted to 30 thalers, the lad working from five in the morning until eleven at night. Fate willed that by a strange chain of circumstances the dream of Troy should be realised. Being on one occasion in the cellar with his master, Schliemann broke a blood-vessel in

the breast while attempting to lift a barrel, and was discharged as useless. Something had to be done; so he walked barefooted to Hamburg, a distance of 130 miles, begged as he walked, and on arriving told his story to a relation, a shipbroker, who at once secured him the situation of cabin-boy on board the 'Dorothea,' bound for Venezuela.

Leaving Hamburg on November 28, 1841, the 'Dorothea' encountered a storm the same day, and for a fortnight was beaten about most terribly. Schliemann suffered both from sickness and from the brutality of the mate who drove him with a whip up the mast. On December 12, the vessel stranded on the shoals of Texel, and two boats were lost in launching. Schliemann escaped with the crew in a third boat, which after tossing about all night reached the mainland at nine o'clock the next morning. Thence Schliemann walked to Burg Texel, where the Mecklenburg Consul paid his fare by sea to Amsterdam, in the streets of which town he wandered destitute on December 19, 1841. In despair Schliemann went to the Mecklenburg Consulate for relief. Supposing the wretched youth to be a professional beggar, the servant slammed the door in his face. Back went the poor fellow to his ship, wrote a letter to the Consul, and thus fortified again presented himself before the irate maid, who bore the communication to her master and brought back an answer in the shape of two florins. This small sum was soon exhausted, and, after being two days without money, Schliemann feigned sickness in order to gain admission to the hospital, where he remained a week, during which time he wrote to his relative in Hamburg, imploring help. The letter arrived on Christmas Eve while the shipbroker was entertaining a party of friends, and led to a collection of 230 florins, which was forwarded to the care of the Mecklenburg Consul, who at once sent for Schliemann, presented him with the welcome gift, and obtained for him a situation with a merchant named F. C. Quien, for whom he copied letters, turned the lithographic press, and cashed money on exchanges.

No longer pressed for bread, Schliemann began to build castles, and one night dreamed of the number 111,641. Not devoid of superstition, he wrote to Berlin, and enclosed ten thalers to be invested in this number of the coming lottery. As 111,641 had already been taken, another number was sent in its place. Schliemann lost his ten thalers, while the figures of his dream drew the great prize of 120,000 thalers! This coincidence did not serve to cure Schliemann of his superstition, and when an old tailor gave him advice as to the best way of attaining fortune, he listened eagerly. 'Look here,' said the ex-tailor, 'I've an infallible receipt

for getting rich. I was a poor, broken-down man until my fifty-seventh year. I had hardly bread enough to eat. All at once I found myself in good circumstances. Why? Because I began to put on my left stocking, my left shoe, my left everything first! I opened a water-cure, and have been prospering ever since.' So impressed was Schliemann by this confession, that he at once began to follow his friend's example. To-day the habit of putting out his left hand and foot first has become second nature, and it is not a little comical to note the earnestness with which he begs others to do the same. 'It does no harm,' he says, 'and I assure you my luck changed from the moment I heeded the old tailor.'

The merchant Quien was so pleased with Schliemann's energy as to allow him time for study. Languages were the young clerk's passion. He believed that his fortune lay in their mastery, that with them he could storm the heavens. When he came across a man who promised to teach him English in six months, he seized upon the offer with avidity. His teacher proved to be good, and he made excellent progress. Learning 'Ivanhoe' and 'The Vicar of Wakefield' by heart greatly improved a naturally bad memory. He wrote from dictation, and paid great attention to his chirography, which was sadly at fault. To-day Schliemann can repeat long extracts from Scott and Goldsmith, and declares that the beauty of their English has been of incalculable advantage to him. Though constantly running about the streets, he always had his grammar and dictionary under his arm, and at the end of the six months his teacher's promise was fulfilled. Necessity invented for him a method which greatly facilitated his studies. This method was to read aloud constantly, never to translate, to take a lesson daily, to write compositions on interesting subjects, to correct them under the master's eye, to learn them by heart, to repeat verbatim one day the composition corrected the day previous. Even when it rained, he never went out without his book; and as he waited for letters at the Post-office, he pored over his lessons.

At that time Schliemann understood and spoke English better than at present, for the reason that his intelligence was concentrated upon one language. Now he is a polyglot.

The young clerk's salary amounted to 800 francs a year. One half he paid for lessons, the other half he devoted to his physical necessities. He lived in one small room of a badly-built house, half frozen in winter, roasted in summer, breakfasted on rye soup, and paid twopence for his dinner. No suffering, however, could kill his energy, and he quickly turned his attention from English to French, and in another six months found that he had

mastered a second language. Then followed the study of Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Dutch, a knowledge of each being acquired in the incredibly short period of six weeks.

At last Schliemann's employers became dissatisfied with what they considered his neglect of mechanical work, and the clerk was on the point of securing a position in Hamburg when, owing to a dispute between two employ  s of B. H. Schroeder and Co., Schliemann, through the influence of one, took the place of the other. His knowledge of languages was his recommendation. At twenty-two years of age, with no more outdoor work, and with an annual salary of 600 florins, Schliemann in 1844 began correspondence and bookkeeping. In a few weeks his salary was voluntarily increased to 1,000 guilders, an enormous sum for those days, and the department of commission and banking was assigned to him. Then there came to Amsterdam two Russian agents bent upon buying that very dear commodity, indigo. As they experienced great difficulty in making themselves understood, Schliemann thought he would show his gratitude to his employers by learning Russian and thus facilitating their trade. On seeking books, he could only find a tolerable dictionary, an intolerable translation of 'Telemachus' still in his possession, and a very bad grammar, which for thirty-one years has been in New York, the property of Schliemann's intimate friend, Mr. G. Janssen, Consul for Oldenburg. Thus equipped, the next thing was to secure a teacher. None could be found. Undaunted as usual, the ambitious student went to work by himself, and after many days succeeded in learning the characters and their pronunciation. As soon as he could read, he took up 'Telemachus,' composed exercises, and, after learning a hundred or more words, hired for four francs a week an old Jew, who sat to him two hours every evening as audience. Not a syllable did the Jew understand; but this mattered little to Schliemann, who merely wanted a lay figure at which to hurl recitations and compositions. The Jew nodded, applauded, and pretended to be enormously interested, as he was—in the fee that followed. The copy of 'Telemachus' used by Schliemann was a hundred and twenty years old, and gave him very little idea of modern Russian—the language having undergone radical changes in recent years. Constant rehearsals in presence of the Jew, however, made Schliemann tolerably fluent in the use of words. The poor Jew could endure these lessons; not so the inmates of his well-ventilated house, and twice was he turned into the street for disturbing his neighbours' peace. His zeal remained undiminished, and in six weeks he began to write business letters to Moscow.

Through a Russian family who visited Amsterdam in 1845, and

with whom he became intimate, Schliemann secured orders for indigo that proved very satisfactory to his patrons. The head of this family proposed to go into partnership with him at Moscow, promising capital to the amount of 8,000*l.* Sanctioned by his employers, who appointed him their Russian agent, Schliemann joyfully accepted the offer, and, in January 1846, started on his journey. As the railroad to St. Petersburg was not yet completed, he posted, spent half his ready money in travelling, and arrived with only 100 roubles and the credit of his house. The Russian friend was incompetent to undertake the business proposed, and at the end of six days Schliemann went to Moscow, where, owing to his speaking the language, he met with considerable success. His first order was for 1,000 boxes of indigo.

Though he worked early and late, it was not until the end of 1847 that Schliemann put by 200*l.* In 1849 his capital amounted to 4,000*l.*, and then he sailed for California, *viâ* New York and the Isthmus, in search of a brother whom he had sent to America, and who was reported to be very ill. On arriving at Sacramento, Schliemann learned of this brother's death. Sadly disappointed, he went to work, first buying gold of the miners and sending it to San Francisco for sale; later, he opened a small exchange bank; and as on July 4, 1850, California was made a State, Schliemann, with the rest of its population, became a citizen of the American Republic. Having brought with him about 2,400*l.*, which he increased to 6,000*l.*, Schliemann returned to St. Petersburg, and in 1853 made large profits. The Crimean war filled his pockets. Merchants lost courage, everything was brought overland from Prussian ports, and in the general panic Schliemann shrewdly reaped a harvest. Thinking it would be advisable to attend the indigo sales at Amsterdam, he made extensive purchases, which, shipped from London and Hamburg, were all directed to the Prussian town of Memel on the Russian frontier. Returning by the way of Königsberg and Tilsit, Schliemann arrived at the former town during the night. On looking out of his hotel window the next morning, he saw the tower of the green gate, on which was the following inscription in large gold letters:—

Vultus fortunæ
Variatur imagine lunæ;
Crescit, decrescit,
Constans persistere nescit.

Strangely impressed by this inscription, the merchant traveller became convinced of impending misfortune. On reaching Tilsit, he learned that a terrible conflagration had destroyed Memel. Hurrying on by post, Schliemann's own eyes soon beheld the truth: the town had been transformed into a smoking grave-yard, and soli-

tary chimneys stood up like gloomy sentinels over the desolation. Seeking his correspondent, Schliemann was told to look among the ashes for his goods. 'Then I am ruined!' exclaimed the unhappy man. He had invested his entire capital, 22,500*l.*, in indigo. Going to the Post-office, he spoke of his great loss to an official, who at once asked for his name, and on being told exclaimed: 'Why, you are the only person who has *not* lost! Your goods arrived too late to be sent to their warehouse. You'll find them safe outside the town.' It seemed incredible, yet the official's report proved to be correct. Schliemann thinks that putting on his left stocking first must have had something to do with such good luck. This fire took place in October 1854, the year in which he learned Polish and Swedish. Returning to St. Petersburg, he did a great business in 1855, and a still greater in 1856. The crisis of 1857 affected him but slightly, and the following year he partially retired with a fortune of 80,000*l.* 'I've made money enough,' he said; 'now I'll gratify my natural inclinations. I will see the world.'

In 1858 Schliemann visited Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Egypt, ascended the Nile to the second cataract, studied Arabic *en route*, and rode through the desert on horseback. From Jerusalem he journeyed through Arabia Petræa to Petra, saw Syria and Smyrna; and in the summer of 1859 beheld Athens for the first time. The intensity of the sun bringing on fever, the indefatigable traveller proceeded to St. Petersburg, where he gained a law-suit for the amount of 16,000*l.* Foreseeing the financial crisis which would result from the American civil war, he secured his capital, speculated most successfully in cotton and tea, and in 1863 retired completely from business possessed of a fortune such as his youth had never dreamed of. Schliemann regarded it as a means to an end—that end being the excavation of Troy, Ithaca, and Mycenæ. Long afraid to touch the Greek language, lest it should distract his mind from commercial pursuits, he at last found its fascination irresistible. On leaving the Lutheran church in January 1856, he met a professor, who, on repeating a sonorous verse from Homer, exclaimed, 'What a shame it is you do not know Greek!' That very day Schliemann engaged an excellent teacher of ancient Greek, but to his surprise found that for one entire week he made little progress. To break the back of his difficulty, the student began modern Greek, which is much easier. First he translated 'Paul and Virginia,' of which, on its completion, he had learned half the words. On going over it again, he was master of all. He wrote compositions which he recited, and in six weeks spoke with facility. Then he betook

himself with enthusiasm to the classics, beginning with the simplest, and finally reading the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' again and again.

Having learned Arabic in Egypt, where he had a practice of six months, Schliemann acquired the *finesse* of this language on his return to St. Petersburg. Engaging two professors, he read daily from the 'Arabian Nights' and other books. Thus equipped, he started forth on a second tour. After seeing Tunis, Carthage, Utica, and Malta, he again went to Egypt, and passed the entire spring of 1864 in Italy, studying archæology. Then he proceeded to Paris for the purpose of devoting himself to universal history, in the knowledge of which he was very deficient. During November of this same year he began a journey round the world. India and China were inspected, the Chinese Wall inspiring a book in French. 'It is the grandest work ever accomplished by man,' says Schliemann. Visiting Japan in June 1865, Schliemann was well received by the American Chargé d'Affaires. Finding no interesting antiquities, he departed for San Francisco in a small sailing vessel which was fifty days *en route*. To beguile the tedium, he wrote in French a book on China and Japan. On reaching California he marvelled at its wonderful transformation, and, catching the isthmus fever in his journey to New York, was dangerously ill at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. After seeing Niagara Falls and Canada, Schliemann sailed to Havana, thence to Vera Cruz; and though Mexico interested him because of its age, nevertheless, as its antiquity had neither chronology nor literature, it failed to inspire a desire for investigation. Going direct to Paris by the way of St. Thomas, Schliemann passed a short time in London, where he was feasted by the bankers. Revisiting St. Petersburg, Moscow, and the Crimea, he sailed up the Danube, and once more resided temporarily in Paris, where, during the winter of 1866 and 1867, he studied history and archæology with Beulé, Membre de l'Institut and former Minister of the Interior. The teacher fascinated his pupil, particularly in his treatment of the history of Augustus, every incident of whose reign Schliemann dwells upon with delight. How many men of fortune are willing to go to school at the ripe age of forty-five? The spring of 1867 found Schliemann in America. He saw by turns New York, Chicago, St. Louis (which he calls 'the pearl of cities'), Jackson, New Orleans, Havana, and passed his Christmas in what he considers the most wonderful city in the world. 'If you esteem New York so highly, why not live there?' once asked an American. 'Ah!' replied the archæologist with a sigh, 'there's nothing to dig!'

Leaving the United States, Schliemann passed from Paris to

Rome, where, in April, he devoted himself to antiquities, particularly to the house of Nero, though all that he saw was of secondary interest. Homer's disciple wanted something older. After a month's stay in Naples, the restless traveller sailed from Brindisi to Corfu, the ancient Scherie, a name derived undoubtedly from the Phœnician word *schera*, meaning commerce. No sooner had Schliemann debarked, on July 6, than he sought out the places endeared to him by the study of the 'Odyssey,' first going to where Nausicaa washed the linen with her servants and received Ulysses. Stripped to his shirt, Schliemann waded for half an hour through a small river, the water sometimes coming up to his breast, and was rewarded for his pains by a sight of the two great stones that tradition points out as the lavatory of the ancient Cocyra. The situation answers to Homer's description. Spending a day at Cephalonia, where he visited the Acropolis of Samos, Schliemann hired a sailing-boat and sped to Ithaca. Great was his emotion in putting his foot upon the ancient kingdom of Ulysses, whose adventures had excited in him the liveliest interest. He was fortunate in securing as guide and cicerone to Vathy the famous miller Panagis Asproiéraca, whose donkey did good service in carrying his luggage. Learning that he had come to Ithaca for archaeological research, the guide applauded his motive, and, as they walked, recounted the adventures of Ulysses from beginning to end. His volubility convinced Schliemann that he had had other audiences. On complimenting the guide on his memory and cleverness in turning ancient into modern Greek, he astonished Schliemann by declaring that not only did he not understand ancient Greek, but that he could neither read nor write the modern language! What he knew had been handed down by tradition from one member of his family to another. No one on the island knew the history of Ulysses as well as he, though all had a confused idea of it.

Ithaca is one of the seven places said to have been Homer's birthplace, and has really the best claim to this honour. Every hill, every rock, every fountain, and every olive grove breathes of the blind poet and his hero. Schliemann soon made a pilgrimage to the little gulf called Dexia where the Phœnician mariners left the sleeping Ulysses with his treasures. Had Homer written yesterday, he could not have described the locality with greater accuracy. Nearly fifty yards from the sea, Schliemann saw the grotto of the nymphs where Ulysses placed the treasures brought from Scherie. There were the two doors spoken of by Homer. That on the north-east is the entrance for mortals, according to the poet. It is the natural opening to the grotto. The door to-

wards the south is fifty feet high, and has been artificially cut for the escape of smoke, as the sacrifices were evidently made at this point, where there is an altar. It was Homer's door of the immortals. No man could enter a chimney. The stalactite formations in the grotto closely resemble the distaffs conjured up by Homer's imagination.

Later, Schliemann ascended Mount Ætos, which, owing to the steepness of its sides, forced him to climb with hands as well as feet, though the natives scale the rocks like goats. They cultivate it to the summit, their only instrument being a pointed hoe. What he suffered from heat and thirst was forgotten in finding himself in the midst of the ruins of Ulysses' palace. With the 'Odyssey' in his hands and a magnificent panorama before his eyes, he wondered whether he was the same person that years before had sold herrings and walked penniless to Hamburg. Here he excavated a small cemetery, and found some pottery, the date of which must have been about 200 B.C. Outside the cemetery he discovered a sacrificial knife, an idol in terra cotta, and other antiquities. He would have given five years of his life for an inscription, but, alas! there was none.

Momentous as is the arrival of a stranger in the capital of Ithaca, it is of still greater importance in the country; and on the day Schliemann visited the field of Laertes, he was surrounded by villagers. Perplexed with questions, he replied by translating into their dialect portions of the twenty-fourth chapter of the 'Odyssey.' The description of the miseries endured by the old King Laertes on that very spot made a great impression upon his simple audience. Tears filled their eyes, and on his concluding, men, women, and children embraced him, saying: 'You have given us a great pleasure. We thank you very much.' They carried him in triumph to their village, and overwhelmed him with hospitality, for which they refused the least compensation. The Ithacans venerate their ancestry. In every family one daughter bears the name of Penelope, and two sons will certainly respond to the names of Telemachus and Ulysses. Beggars are unknown, but not one in fifty can read. The greatest calamity of the island, as of Greece, is the existence of 149 annual fête-days.

Pursuing his journey along the side of the ancient mountain Néritos, Schliemann entered the fertile valley of Polis. 'I couldn't help laughing,' says the traveller, 'to think that nearly all archaeologists place the Homeric capital in the valley of Polis, when, according to verses 205 and 206 of chapter xxiv. of the "Odyssey," Ulysses and Telemachus *descended* the city to go to the garden of Laertes. The ruins in this valley are very

ancient. Of the Acropolis itself there is nothing but some enclosed walls. I saw, too, a roofless edifice said to have been Homer's school. Who knows? In the poet's time the neighbouring mountain was covered with foliage. Now there are but a few olive trees. Going to the southern extremity of the island, I am sure that I came upon the twelve pigsties which Eumeus built for the hogs of his master. The situation answers perfectly to the description in the "Odyssey," and I found the ruins of eight or ten recesses of remote antiquity. Near the pigsties is Homer's steep rock of Corax, below which is the fountain of Arethusa. Now the body of water is small, but formerly it was copious enough to cut a deep glen through the rock. The oaks that once abounded are no more. Acorns are as much things of the past as the royal pigs that fed upon them.'

Schliemann never approached one of the isolated habitations on the island without being assailed by dogs. Stones and threats generally drove them away; but one day, when entering an enclosure near the fountain of Arethusa, he found the dogs regardless of missiles. No one heeded his cries for help, and he began to fear for his life, when, suddenly remembering what Ulysses had done under similar circumstances, he sat down and remained immovable. The four dogs that had seemed ready to devour him formed a circle, but made no attempt to touch him, though their barking continued. His humiliation soothed their ferocity. Both Pliny and Aristotle assert that dogs never bite men who are seated, and to this precaution Schliemann believes that he owes his life. When his guide and the peasant owner of the dogs came to the rescue, Schliemann reproached the latter for keeping such brutes. The peasant apologised by saying that as the dogs had never before seen a stranger, what could he expect? They did not attack natives. On asking how so poor a man could afford to feed four great animals, the peasant's indignation almost equalled that of his dogs. 'Since the days of Telemachus, Ulysses, and Penelope, my ancestors have kept four dogs, and shall I keep less? Sooner will I starve!' was the proud reply.

Leaving Ithaca with regret, Schliemann went first to New and then to Ancient Corinth, mounting to the famous fortress of Acro-Corinth situated upon an almost perpendicular rock with which Gibraltar and Aden can in no way compare. Going to Mycenæ on a veritable Rosinante, he began his investigations with Pausanias in hand, and found that his description of the position of the five royal tombs had been erroneously interpreted by scholars. When Pausanias visited Mycenæ, he saw a portion of its citadel, above the door of which are two lions, the treasures of Atreus and

his sons, the tombs of Atreus, of Agamemnon's companions assassinated by Ægisthus, of Cassandra, of Agamemnon, of his charioteer Eurymedon, of the sons of Cassandra, of Electra, of Ægisthus, and of Clytemnestra. 'As, according to Pausanias,' argues Schliemann, 'these two last tombs were removed some distance from the wall, Ægisthus and Clytemnestra not being deemed worthy of burial inside the wall where lay Agamemnon and those who were assassinated with him, it is safe to conclude that Pausanias must have seen all the mausoleums within the Acropolis, and that only those of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra were outside of the citadel. Now, scholars have believed that Pausanias referred to the city walls; but as there were no city walls in his time, for the excellent reason that they had been destroyed by the Argives B.C. 468, he must have meant the walls he saw with his own eyes. So I made up my mind that if I sought for the royal tombs inside the citadel, I should find them sooner or later. I believe I have found them within the past year, as all the world knows.' After seeing Argos, Nauplium, and taking a second glimpse of Corinth, Schliemann crossed the isthmus, and visited the site of the Isean games. Sitting on one of the benches of the theatre, he thought of the poet Ibycus, who, having landed at the port Kenchriæ, intending to witness the games, was murdered on the road by robbers, and in dying was said to have invoked a flock of cranes flying above him to avenge his death. The murderers themselves went to the theatre, and were discovered by their trepidation and exclamations at the sight of the cranes which they thought had come to betray their secret. 'But there are no cranes in Greece,' argued Schliemann, 'and the mountains before me are called "Gerania," the mountains of the cranes. Surely Ibycus must have called upon them as witnesses.' The theory is certainly ingenious.

Proceeding to Athens, Schliemann, on August 8, 1868, arrived at Constantinople. Going at once to the Dardanelles, he took horse to Bounarbaschi, which ever since 1787 has had the honour of being considered the site of Priam's Troy. It is a miserable village, numbering twenty-three houses, of which fifteen are Turkish and eight Albanian. Great was Schliemann's emotion on beholding the immense Trojan plain; but the moment he investigated, he doubted. The plain seemed long, and the site too far from the sea. Then, when he examined the soil, and found no trace whatever of tiles or pottery, doubts increased, only to be doubled on visiting the springs at the foot of the hill on which Bounarbaschi is situated. These springs are supposed to be two sources of the Scamander spoken of in the twenty-second book of the 'Iliad.' Instead of two springs, one of boiling and the other of icy cold water, there are forty springs, all of

63½° Fahrenheit. As all but one of these springs come from one fall, Schliemann thinks it impossible that their temperature should ever have varied; and why should Homer specify two springs, when there are forty? Every detail in Homer points to the great river that flows through the Trojan plain as being the ancient Scamander. Moreover, the Greek army went three and four times from their camps on the Hellespont to the walls of Troy and back again in a day. Consequently the distance could not have exceeded three miles, whereas Bounarbaschi is nine miles from the sea. Determined, however, to make assurance doubly sure, Schliemann set five men to work with pickaxes and shovels. In Bounarbaschi, beyond the village, near the springs, he found nothing but soil untouched by the hand of man. There was a complete absence of pottery, that indestructible witness of ancient habitation. At the extremity of the village heights he found a small citadel with an insignificant accumulation of rubbish, the average depth of which did not exceed one foot. The potsherds were Hellenic, of the second or third century B.C. Schliemann claims that this little citadel is the town of Gergis destroyed by Atala. Digging his way along, he visited the spot which Demetrius of Skepsis and Strabo, who followed the former's theory without personal investigation, declared to be the site of Troy. It was easily recognised by the distances given. Schliemann was rewarded by a glimpse of some pottery not half a foot deep. The long projecting height, which Demetrius may have thought to have indicated a wall, is composed of pure gravel sand. 'Thus,' says Schliemann, 'I ploughed to the high plateau of Hissarlik, and after attentive examination became convinced that ancient Troy had been baptised *Ilium Novum* 1425 years after its entire destruction, 700 B.C. This is unique in history. In this conviction I do not stand alone, although most scholars hold different theories. This site is strewn with the debris of beautiful sculpture and fragments of Greek pottery.'

The moment the traveller puts his foot on the plain of Troy he is struck by the magnificent position of the hill of Hissarlik, which seems destined by nature to be the site of a great city. Well fortified, it would command the entire plain. In all the country round it has no equal. Schliemann resolved to excavate; but, having no firman, he returned to Paris, wrote a book in French on his travels, and forwarded a scientific dissertation in Greek to the University of Rostock, for which he received the diploma of L.L.D. He is much more fluent in Greek than in Latin.

Towards the end of 1868 Schliemann went to New York, as most of his investments are American. There he remained until September 1869. In March 1870 he returned to the Troad, and,

having obtained a firman from Constantinople, made some small excavations. On Mount Hissarlik he sank shafts and found an accumulation of débris six feet deep. Forced to desist on account of the refusal of the proprietors to sell the land, he once more betook himself to Paris. Not being able to secure the land at any price, he applied to Safvet Pasha, Turkish Minister of Public Instruction, who expropriated the land and gave him a firman. Thus fortified, he worked on a large scale in 1871, and became possessed of the idea that one half of Mount Hissarlik—102 feet high—is artificial soil. Here Xerxes, before invading Greece, sacrificed 1,000 oxen to the Ilian Minerva. Here also Alexander the Great made sacrifices, and, taking some Trojan swords which had been preserved in the temple, caused them to be carried before him in his battles. Four miles from Hissarlik is the tomb of Achilles, around which Alexander ran naked three times, glorifying his hero and rejoicing that he should have had so great a poet to perpetuate his exploits.

Fever breaking out in 1872, Schliemann was obliged to desist for fear of the miasma; but in 1873 he was able to proceed more satisfactorily, and in 1874 published '*Troy and its Remains*,' wherein he summed up the result of his labours.

Obtaining permission from the Greek Government in February 1874 to excavate Mycenæ, Schliemann sank thirty-four shafts in the Acropolis to study its underground topography, and found that the five royal tombs must necessarily be, if at all, on the first western terrace in immediate proximity to the Lion Gate. Owing, however, to a law-suit with Turkey, he was forced to postpone his investigations, and returned to Athens, where he spent the year in taking down a great quadrangular tower built by Acciaiuolo in the fifteenth century. It was a remnant of the Frankish possession and a dishonour to the Acropolis. He breathed more freely when he had spent 12,000 francs in levelling it to the ground. The whole Greek nation rejoiced at the demolition; but the thousands of owls that had built their nests in the tower held an indignant mass meeting, and with piercing cries protested against being turned out of their ancestral haunts. The tower was built of large blocks belonging to ancient monuments of the Acropolis. Research at Propylæa produced slight results; the sculpture found is in the museum at Athens. In 1875 Schliemann made short visits to France, England, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany, and examined their museums. On going later to Italy, Signor Bonghi, Minister of Public Instruction, decided that he should investigate the island of Motye near Marsala, Sicily, and the nearest point to Carthage. The ancient Greek author Polyænus writes that the Carthaginians

had a telegraph between this coast and their city, employing a sort of telescope or dioptra; but this, Schliemann asserts, is utterly impossible, as the distance is 150 miles, and both shores are so low as to render signals positively useless. 'While in the Gulf of Mexico I saw the volcano of Orizaba at a distance of 145 miles, says Schliemann, 'but the volcano is 15,000 feet high. The topography of Carthage and Sicily cannot have changed; consequently the curve of the globe renders signal telegraphing impossible.'

Motye is a small flat island only one mile in circumference, inhabited by nineteen peasant families who by perpetual intermarriages have become related. They live on the produce of vineyards, their only staple. Schliemann employed fifty men in digging, but without reward. He next turned his attention to Marsala. Sicily was a very flourishing island in ancient times. The tyrant Dionysius of Syacuse besieged Motye 398 B.C., employing for the first time the formidable catapult which revolutionised warfare as formidably as more recent gunpowder. The Carthaginians held out bravely for eight months, but on storming the city Dionysius took it, slaughtered the men, and enslaved the women. Schliemann hoped to find traces of the past, but discovered nothing. Only here and there in small valleys was there debris from six to ten feet deep; the average was from one to three feet. He saw remnants of stone houses joined together with cement, which surprised him, as he thought cement for building purposes had not been used before the Roman emperors. These houses belonged to a city that had been destroyed long anterior to the imperial epoch. The only medals discovered were Carthaginian. A few whorls of terra cotta and some stone vases of little scientific interest being the only results of a week's labour, Schliemann went to the ancient town of Segesta, said to have been founded by Trojan fugitives. Wherever, according to tradition, the Trojans founded colonies, they began the names of their cities with the first syllable of the name of a Trojan god or hero, Sigo or Siko. The name is found on nearly all Trojan inscriptions, and can be recognised in the river Scamander. This theory was first advanced by the late Professor Martin Haug, of Munich, and has since been adopted by Oppert of Paris and by Lenormant. The Scæan Gate of Troy, its port Sigeion, and the site of Alexandria Troas which Strabo called Sigia, owe their names to the same source.

After fruitlessly sinking shafts in Segesta, Schliemann visited Palermo and Messina, and investigated the site of Toromina. Thence he proceeded to Catania and Syracuse, but, finding no prehistoric debris, returned to Naples and explored the site of ancient Arpino, birthplace of Marius and Cicero. There was no debris,

and below the surface his pickaxe at once touched rock. Rome became the next *point d'appui*. Excavating in ancient Albano, whence large numbers of vases had been exported on the assertion that they had been found below a stratum of lava, Schliemann proved the falsity of this statement. Cutting below the lava, he found no trace whatever of human industry. Moreover, the labourers of Albano and its environs, who all their lives break up strata of lava for the purpose of enriching their vineyards, swore under oath that never had they found either plants or objects of human handiwork. Here and there, between the strata, were accumulations of débris 4 to 6 feet deep, of ancient Etruscan houses B.C. 500. In the same places he found myriads of fragments of pottery similar to that which the impostors had sold as coming from below the lava in order to enhance its value.

Schliemann's next site was that of Populonia, one of the twelve great cities of Etruria. Dig as he might, he could only turn up useless débris in two places, and became convinced that Italy had been colonised centuries after Greece. Lured again to the East, he succeeded in obtaining through the powerful support of Raschid Pasha, for five years Governor of Syria, a firman which sent him back to the Hellespont in April 1876, where he found a strong opponent in the Governor-General, Ibrahim Pasha, who, ever since Schliemann's departure in June 1873, had granted firmans to every traveller. To Schliemann he was disposed to accord nothing. Though Ibrahim Pasha should have respected the Sultan's firman, he insisted that Schliemann should employ several of his own officers at a monthly salary of 20*l*. Every possible hindrance was placed in the way, and Schliemann was obliged to take such workmen as suited the Governor-General, thus keeping out better men. No sketches nor photographs of the 'finds' were permitted. Endurance ceasing to be a virtue, Schliemann, after two months' sojourn in a filthy inn, took refuge in Athens, and wrote a letter to the *Times*, exposing the venality of a governor who gave places to his relations and administered the province so badly that robberies and murders were daily occurrences. The article, which appeared on July 24, was reprinted in Turkey, and led to Ibrahim Pasha's dismissal. When the good news came, Schliemann was already in the depths of Mycenæ's citadel, having begun digging on July 31. What was accomplished all know. Schliemann began simultaneous excavations wherever he thought he might find the five tombs, first in the citadel, secondly at the Lion Gate, and thirdly in the adjacent treasury. This last was superintended by Mrs. Schliemann during four months. The treasures of gold and silver brought to light denote

great artistic perfection, and demonstrate the existence of a school of domestic artists entirely independent of Oriental influence. Schliemann maintains that these works prove Homer to have been an Achaian, and his poems no myths. Completing his researches in December 1876, Schliemann at once began his book on Mycenæ, which was written in English at Athens, and also prepared three hundred photographs. This work occupied three months, during which time he turned one half of it into German. It will appear in November next, and then we shall learn the details of the most extraordinary 'find' ever made.

Schliemann's firman for Troy extends over two years, but as long as the present war lasts it will not be safe to pursue scientific researches. The enthusiastic archæologist believes that he can help the Greek Government to unearth the tombs of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra, if he should be called upon for assistance. Meanwhile his thoughts turn to Ithaca, where he believes the sinking of shafts will lead to vast and systematic excavation. To compare the prehistoric remains of that island's ancient city with those of the royal tombs of Mycenæ and of the four prehistoric cities in Troy, will be of absorbing interest not only to the indefatigable Schliemann, but to the intelligent public of all nations:

From Fontainebleau.

'*DE nos délicieux déserts de Fontaine belle eau :*' so wrote Henry of Navarre to his beloved Gabrielle very nearly three hundred years ago ; and so, in truth, one might write now—there could be no better description.

Does not its very name suggest the place ? Even to those who have never seen it, does not a vision of green glades and rippling fountains ; of great waving trees and cool dark shadows ; of soft whispering breezes and haunted hunting-grounds, a sense of infinite solitude and silence,—rise before their eyes as they hear the name ? And if, by and by, they are fortunate enough to realise their visions, does not the reality of their former fancies strike them with curious vividness and truth ?

I am trying to realise it all as I sit in the forest this morning.

The sun is shining, a little soft wind is blowing, the lights and shadows are playing hide-and-seek among the branches of the trees. Every now and then a sudden shower of leaves comes pattering down on my book. I do not heed them, however ; I have better things to read to-day than printed words. The wind sighing among the branches makes a sound like the ripple of a fountain : and there is a real fountain too, close at hand, playing away amid beds of blazing autumn flowers—yellow dahlias and scarlet lobelias. But this I cannot see, except by getting up, and turning round. All I can see is a little bit of the great shadowy mysterious forest, with innumerable white roads cutting through it. Sometimes these roads meet and join together, like so many arms of a finger-post. There is one of these finger-posts before me now, 'a round point,' as little Yvonne de Richmond, with a foolish longing in her foolish little heart, chooses to call it. Four roads branch out of it ; they go this way and that, and they all look green and shady and very enticing, as far down as one can see. But that is only a very little way ; a pine tree closes up one, a blue mist shuts in another, the rest twist, and turn, and take sudden bends, and so are lost in the general forest. It seems like a type of our own lives. We try to peer into the future, we try to see our own lives, and those of our friends rolling out before us, smooth and green, or dull and grey, as the case may be ; but it is only a very little way that we can see, after all, scarcely a single step before us as it were, scarcely even a day into the future, and then the prospect

closes up, then there falls a sudden mist, or there comes an unexpected zigzag, and the whole face of the world is changed for us.

Yvonne de Richmond cannot understand the pleasure I take in the forest: 'If it were the sea now, dancing and rippling' (she was thinking of the blue waves that wash round the shores of her native Brittany), 'I could understand a little; or, better still, if those white roads were crowded *boulevards*, and the stiff trees were tall shops full of pretty things, then I could understand altogether. But the green trees that are always green, and the dreary roads that never lead anywhere, and down which no one passes—bah! *ma cousine*' (with a little shrug of her little shoulders), 'how can one find any *distraction* there?' Yvonne de Richmond had not yet arrived at that age when it is thought necessary to gush over the beauties of nature.

It was in vain, however, that I pointed out to her that the trees were not always green—sometimes they were brown. *Then* they were always brown, she retorted,—or black and bare, as the case might be. She was speaking of the days in a season, not of the seasons themselves. But about the roads being lonely, there she was altogether wrong; a score of people, at least, would pass up and down them, in the course of the day. Sometimes it would be a labourer in his blue blouse, lumping along the woodland ways down which *le bon roi Henri quatre* used to ride so merrily; or sometimes, it would be a group of black-eyed children sent out to gather sticks to boil the *pot au feu* at home; or again, it is a forester, grim and stern, in his tight jacket and round cap, with a pouch hanging by his side, and a gun in his hand, at the sight of which the children all scamper away into the thicket just like so many rabbits. Sometimes, too, the gentlemen go to the *chasse* along those paths. They dress themselves in brown velveteen, they wear gaiters, they carry big sticks in their hands, and they stride along at a rapid pace; this, even Yvonne admitted, was an interesting sight. Edgard de Richmond, her young cousin, used to go to the *chasse* after this fashion sometimes. But that was ages ago, two years at least; and with the exception of *les promenades à la chasse de ces messieurs*, nothing amusing, nothing remarkable, ever passed up and down these forest roads. So, at least, Yvonne declares.

'But, *chère enfant*,' said Madame de Jaquemart, folding up a letter she had been reading, and looking round kindly at her little grand-daughter, 'why expect anything remarkable? Believe me, the happiest ways and times are always the least eventful; I, indeed, have good reason to know it is so.'

'But I should like to know it too,' begins Yvonne, a little

petulantly. Whereupon Madame de Jaquemart puts her hands on the young girl's shoulders, and looking into her face with those sweet, sad, compelling eyes of hers, says very tenderly and earnestly: 'Ah! Vivi, my child, do not say that, do not say that.' And Vivi, spoilt child as she was, dropped her head, and looked ashamed for once.

Madame de Jaquemart was not at all like the popular conception of a grandmother; neither did she resemble an old picture, or a powdered *marquise*, or any of the other objects to which people are apt to be compared nowadays. She was just herself, and there was no one else like her; even Yvonne would never be what her grandmother had been. The soft brown hair, the sweet dark eyes, these might indeed be bequeathed; but there was a tenderness, a grace, a harmony about Madame de Jaquemart's every movement, every word, that was entirely her own. Her voice was like a strain of strange sad music; and when she spoke, her eyes dilated, and her hands moved as if in sympathy with the language of her lips and eyes.

Her story was a sad one. A dutiful daughter, a happy wife, a devoted mother, a proud grandmother scarcely six years ago—a few short months sufficed to rob her of all these prerogatives except the last. In the spring of the year, when France was wondering over its *Plébiscite*, and all Europe speculating upon the next move of the Man of Mystery, Madame de Jaquemart was mourning her mother's death. Then came the war, the repeated defeats, the terrible siege. All useless mouths were compelled to leave Paris; Madame de Jaquemart and her delicate daughter, Madame de Richmont, found refuge in Brittany. Here, day after day, sad tidings came. Albert de Richmont had been killed on the ramparts; the old baron, his father-in-law, was starved to death. Poor Madame de Richmont sank under this double blow; she died, leaving her little daughter Yvonne, who was then about eleven years old, to her heart-broken mother's care.

Madame de Jaquemart had never the heart to go back again to Paris. Her house had been torn open by an *obus*, her rooms had been pillaged during the Commune; besides which, all her beloved ones were gone, never to return. There was a well-known convent at Fontainebleau: Yvonne might be educated there; she would settle in the old royal town herself, and then she could see the child continually.

Very soon she grew to love the old, dreamy, world-forgotten place. Its soft air seemed to heal and comfort her heart. All its historical associations served to stir and stimulate her mind. She revelled in its memories. She knew more about the palace than

the old *gardiens*, more about the trees than the foresters, more about the place than the oldest inhabitant. Morning after morning, she would call me up to look at the old *château* bathed in the sweet early light. It is always the same. The black shadow of a tree falls against it; the close-clipped acacias throw arches of light on the garden ways; the fountain splashes and dashes; the leaves tremble with delight at growing sunshine. Perhaps, now and then, a vigorous carp makes a sudden leap; perhaps a shower of dewdrops falls over us, as we go brushing through the low branches. But all else is still and silent. And as a background to all stretches the great forest, black and mystical. One cannot help thinking of Catherine de Medicis and her astrologer. Was it not here that she consulted Ruggiero as to the fate of all her sons?

And then presently we go and wander through the white and gold rooms, and look at the painted ceilings and the entwined monograms. 'Here is poor Gabrielle's cypher,' says Madame de Jaquemart, in her soft thrilling voice. 'See, an S with a bar across it, *S. trait*; quite a pretty little pun, isn't it? And yonder is Diane de Poitiers' crescent; hers was a happy name in those days of mythological infatuation. And over our heads is a fresco of Time asleep—ah! no doubt Time often slept here for those merry monarchs.' Then there is the little theatre. The poor Emperor and Empress used to sit on those gold chairs, with their suite around them on red ones. Madame de Jaquemart can remember that, and she had other stories to tell as well. Rousseau was here once; he came to see a performance of his opera '*Devin du Village*.' But his clothes were old and shabby, and the consciousness of this marred his enjoyment of the honour conferred upon him. There he sat, opposite the king, alternately ashamed of his old clothes, and of his foolish shame concerning them. A great mind should be above such trifles. But cannot one fancy the scene: the strange, proud, sensitive man of whom Lord Byron writes:—

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
Or friends by himself banished,

sitting there uncomfortable and uneasy, while the ladies of the court, in their trains and sacques, and laces and jewels, peeped round curiously at the shabby author? He went away the next day without being presented to the king.

Voltaire was here, too, but his way of life was altogether different. He was a gentleman of the bed-chamber, but his duties in that respect seemed to sit lightly upon him. He followed, as he chose, his own pursuits. '*Tous les soirs*,' so he writes from Fontainebleau, '*je fais la ferme résolution d'aller au lever du*

roi, mais tous les matins je reste avec Mérope. Perhaps he is not the first, as he certainly is not the last, who has found the charms of his own creations greater than those of place, or rank, or state.

‘But it was François Premier who was the veritable creator of Fontainebleau,’ Madame de Jaquemart says, as we go down the great curving staircase (we could almost fancy we heard the sweep of the ladies’ trains following us) and into the great quadrangle with its tall chimneys, each one marked with the letter F. ‘He used to say : “*Une cour sans femme est une année sans printemps, un printemps sans roses.*” So all the pretty *châtelaines* came out of their *vieux donjons* in delight, and presently all these rooms and galleries were built to receive them. . . .’ And talking thus, we go on, through the court of White House, in which Napoleon bade farewell to his army, and out into the gardens beyond. And perhaps we stop for a moment and look at the great fat carp rolling about in their *bassin*, and listen to the old woman who sits by and sells hunks of stale bread, and repeats hour after hour, how this fish has been fed by François Premier, and that one by Ninon de l’Enclos, and how all are better off than human beings, seeing they live three hundred years or so, and never have revolutions. She is a charming old woman, and it would be pleasant to linger beside her for a time; but Yvonne is waiting for us in the *jardin anglais*, so thither we repair. It is a delicious spot. The willows dip their branches into the water; the tall trees meet overhead like the aisles of a cathedral; there is a tangle of pine trees, of statues in the background. ‘It was from here,’ says Yvonne, ‘that James of Scotland saw Madame Magdaleine and her ladies bathing in the lake yonder; he set up a mirror, and saw her reflected in it. I suppose he approved of the sight, for he married her afterwards, and took her back with him to Scotland.’

‘And what happened after that, Vivi?’ asks Madame de Jaquemart, smiling.

‘She died in six months of *ennui*. But then James was a barbarian, and Scotland is a land of snow,’ replies Yvonne.

On Sundays, Madame de Jaquemart and her grand-daughter go to mass in the little chapel under the grand staircase of the palace. It was here that Louis Napoleon was baptised, and Elizabeth of Valois married to Philip of Spain. I went there with my cousins once. The ceiling is painted, the walls are all white and gold. A priest in a green vestment bowed before the altar, two little acolytes in red and white knelt beside him; a bell was rung, the people knelt and crossed themselves; then came a great burst of music, and the *fonction* was over. The Protestant service in the

Rue de la Paroisse is much longer. The *pasteur* preaches and prays from a little brown box ; a lady in a room adjoining plays a hymn on the harmonium—the door is set open, and the congregation catch the notes as well as they can, and sing away lustily, albeit in a nasal tone. All this lasts till past noon-day ; and when the people come out of their little *temple*, they find the whole town bathed in sunshine.

Sometimes of a fine afternoon we go out for long drives along the forest roads to Thoméry, to look at the Chasselas grapes ; to Franchard, to see the rocks and the vipers ; or, better still, right into the heart of the forest, where the foliage closes over our heads and shuts out the sky, and the grand old trees have grown into all sorts of fantastic shapes. Madame de Jaquemart has a story for each of them, for Pharamound, for the Siamese twins. And then, when the day is done, we work our way out of the forest once more, and go driving back through the green roads, till presently a sight of the old palace, with its slanting roofs and red chimneys, breaks upon us. And we talk of the royal hunting parties of Francis and his beautiful sister Margaret ; of Henry and Gabrielle ; of Christina of Sweden with her tricks and pranks, and her air of *joli garçon* though she was past thirty, as Mademoiselle de Montpensier took care to point out. But Christina's story ended tragically with the bloody death of the Marquis de Monaldeschi, and little Yvonne did not like to hear it told very often.

To-day, however, Madame de Jaquemart seemed to have no stories at all to tell. She sat still, with the letter in her hand, while every now and then the yellowing leaves came down in a sudden shower. The dark trunks stood up straight and tall ; there was a strong light shining beyond, through the branches. . . . Madame de Jaquemart sat looking at it. Presently the deep tones of the palace clock boomed out the hour,—it was mid-day.

'Have you no story for me to-day, *bonne maman*?' said Yvonne, wondering at this unusual silence.

Madame de Jaquemart's soft eyes grew softer still. '*Ma chérie* ! I think it is thou who art soon to have a story for me,' she says, with a little tender sigh. 'Dost thou remember Edgard de Richmond ?' For all answer, little Vivi blushes a rosy red. 'He is coming to-day,' continues Madame de Jaquemart, with a quiver in her voice ; 'I have received a letter from him. I think he wants to carry away my little Vivi from Fontainebleau. . . .'

'But she will not go without you, *bonne maman*!' cries Yvonne, melting suddenly. And then she flung her arms round her grandmother's neck, and sobbed out Ruth's pathetic words : 'Where thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge.'

Milton in the Porch.

[Milton in his old age, and after the publication of 'Paradise Lost,' was scarcely known to his contemporaries. The popular poets of the day were the 'matchless Orinda' (Mrs. Phillips), and the 'incomparable Cowley.' Where is their fame now and whose fame, except that of Shakespeare, surpasses Milton's?]

BLIND, old and poor, the bosom friend of sorrow,
 Threefold encompassed by malicious Fortune,
 I sit alone beneath th' o'erarching roses
 That shade my cottage porch, to breathe the odours
 That load the breezes of the summer morning,
 And catch the earliest sunshine on my forehead.
 And as I sit, I hear the great world's echoes
 Come floating like the blare of distant trumpets,
 Laden with names that men hold most in honour :
 Names of the prosperous, the rich, the mighty,
 Names of successful knaves and winning gamesters,
 Names of buffoons who tickle fools to laughter,
 Names of the darling bards who rhyme for damsels,
 But have no strength to utter thoughts for thinkers,
 Or tell the time one truth that's worth the knowing.
 And then I sigh with lingering human weakness,
 That I, who soared and sung on heavenly summits,
 And poured forth floods of music and rejoicing,
 Find listeners no more,—that smaller voices
 Attuned to smaller themes find larger audience,
 And that great thoughts offend a little people.
 And these sweet singers pile the people's guineas,
 And say, 'The age is ours—we are its wisdom—
 And wisdom is rewarded of its scholars,'
 While I, alas! must fight with sordid sorrow,—
 Slave of the poverty that holds me captive
 And binds me to its desecrating chariot.
 Yet tell me, oh, my conscience! oh, my spirit!
 And thou, my secret heart! have I not striven
 Through long, brave years of effort and endurance,
 To use my gifts of song to noblest purpose,
 To cheer the sad, to comfort the afflicted,
 And from the good to prophesy the better?
 Have I not? Wherefore ask? God knows His children;
 To-day is not to-morrow; and to-morrow
 Hath its own creed, and utters its own judgments.
 Hush, Disappointment! Raise thy head, sweet Patience!
 Why should I rail at what hard Fortune brings me,
 When I have that within which masters Fortune!
 Though beggared, yet a king! mine is the future;
 My words and thoughts are safe in Time's good keeping,
 And if they're worthy, they shall be immortal!

CHARLES MACKAY.

The World Well Lost.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW THINGS STOOD.

GRANTLEY BOURNE had enough material at this moment for talk on all sides. Wilfrid Machell's engagement with Miss Brown de Paumelle and the various circumstances attending thereon;—the sums that had been paid, and those which had yet to be paid, as the price of the alliance; the restoration of Machells and the splendid appointments to be made in the left wing where the young people were to be lodged; the date of the marriage and the monogram on the locket of the bridesmaids; what the settlements were to be, and how old Brown de Paumelle had resisted and how Wilfrid and my lady had driven their bargain hard and home; who was to have the wedding orders and what the gown was to cost—in short, all the gossip lying about such an event as the fringe to its substance, was naturally the most prominent circumstance in that temple of talk into which the society of the place surged and congregated.

Then there was the ball, and what everyone had done and what everyone had said; how these young ladies had been dressed and with whom those had flirted; what future marriages were evidently afoot and what coolnesses between old friends and acquaintances as evidently afloat; Mr. Brown de Paumelle's rampant vulgarity and Mrs. Brown de Paumelle's underbred timidity; how out of place they all looked and what a ridiculous masquerade the whole thing was—all this made up other of the chapters in that book of detraction wherein the visiting world writes its comments on its friends and its recognition of hospitality.

The madness of Miss Forbes in taking into her service that dreadful ticket-of-leave man was also a subject by no means exhausted; and the certainty still existing—and cherished—that some night they should all find themselves with their throats cut, gave occasion for much prophetic mourning and present indignation. And now the arrival of this long missing and virtually apocryphal Mr. Smith came as the coping-stone to the whole.

It was a fine time for those who loved to discourse about their neighbours—and who does not?—and the talk which eddied from

lip to lip was like a river with the lock-gates lifted. But naturally the coming of Mr. Smith was the sharpest spur of all to the curiosity of the place ; and because no one knew anything about him, everyone assumed to know all, so that the reports which flew about were as many as there were possibilities of circumstance or variations to which a theme can be set.

Everyone called, as of course ; but it was most extraordinary and disappointing—Mr. Smith was never to be seen. Either he was out, or he was tired and asleep ; he had a bad headache that day and could not be disturbed, or he was occupied with agents and men of business whose time was precious and their trains punctual. To be sure, no carriages were seen about the roads on those days when these men from afar—lawyers and agents—stood between Mr. Smith and the local strangers who wished to become his friends ; and the railway porters at the Grantley Bourne station knew nothing of them ; but all the same there they were at Owlett, closeted with the master according to Mrs. Smith—and who had ever known Mrs. Smith other than truthful if less than confidential ? Anyhow, there were always good reasons why the latest arrival should be so invariably invisible ; all of which came to the same thing in the end—the neighbourhood called and Mr. Smith did not appear.

Nor did he come to church. Mrs. Smith and the young people came as usual, the Sunday after his arrival ; but the husband was absent.

The people were greatly discontented. For some years they had looked forward to this arrival as a pleasant addition to their restricted circle, as well as the solution of an irritating problem. And now, when it had come, this obstinate seclusion made the wheat of knowledge chaff, and evaporated the wine of gossip till only the sour lees of conjecture were left. They questioned Mrs. Smith ; but, serene and impenetrable as she had always been, she answered suavely, naturally, but never satisfactorily. At the end of a long conversation she had given no more information than they possessed before ; and that without appearing to withhold any. They took comfort however from the fact that Derwent was pale and in noticeably bad spirits, and that Muriel was pale and somewhat pre-occupied too ;—which did not look much like joy at the return of the father, said the people with that energy which looks like spite but which is only baffled curiosity—the dramatic instinct seeking food and finding none, and gnashing its teeth in consequence. Yet her face brightened as she said : ‘ Dearest papa, yes,’ tenderly, as her ejaculation of assent when, to prove her, they remarked how glad she must be to have him at home again, and how strange it *must have seemed* to her not to have known her own father !

Derwent was more reticent ; as reticent indeed as if he had been his mother translated. He answered point-blank questions, because obliged by the laws of politeness ; but he never went beyond the radical Yes or No which they demanded. When asked things to which he could not give this monosyllabic answer—as : ‘ Where had his father been all these years ? ’ he would draw himself up in his haughty way and say : ‘ Really I cannot go into the list of the stations where my father halted. It would require a gazetteer for that ; ’ or : ‘ He has not had time to tell us his adventures ; ’ or, perhaps : ‘ Ask my father when you see him. You will understand things better from him than you possibly can through me.’

At all events, he would not gratify anyone’s curiosity, and the ill-will that he got by the sparseness of his communications went beyond any that he had yet earned. And he had earned not a little by his personal pride and the stiffness of his moral sentiments alike. For though people resent it as an impiety when your lines of morality are wider than their own, they also resent it as an impertinence when they are closer. And by this view of things young Derwent Smith had been very impertinent indeed.

At home things went somewhat awry in spite of Mrs. Smith’s endeavours to lay them straight and keep them smooth. Her one sole object was to ensure her husband’s happiness, to make him the supreme pontiff of the home life, the centre of the family worship. It was always the father to the children ; never herself, nor them. It was the father’s health that must be cared for ; the father’s convenience that must regulate all goings and comings, and forbid or allow all proposed engagements or occupations ; the father’s nature that was so beautiful, his judgment that was so sound, his presence among them that was so valuable. The domestic religion which had gone on in his name, when a photograph was the shrine and remembrance the sacrament, she still tried to keep up now when he was there in the body to be judged of according to fact and measured by the general standard. But she had her difficulties ; and of these difficulties Derwent—the son who had longed so passionately for the return of his father—was the most formidable.

Keenly alive to the fact that things were not as they seemed and that underneath all this show of love and worship so strenuously insisted on by the mother was hidden some hideous secret which was to be kept from both himself and Muriel at all costs, Derwent held himself rigidly aloof from the domestic ritual, and refused to join in it anyhow. He was revolted at what seemed to him the falseness of the whole thing—the mother’s devotion, the father’s acceptance ; and if the point of his suspicion was wrong the

instinct at least was true—if Edmund Smith had not been a slave-dealer in Africa, he had been perhaps something worse in England. The boy stood apart from it all; but, specially apart from the father. The two indeed were like armed neutrals prepared at any moment for active warfare; though the one was rather repulsed than belligerent, and the other would not have been belligerent at all had he not felt himself deceived. At any moment Edmund would have clasped his boy to his heart if only he would have thrown himself there; but the proud young neck was stiff, and the sweet memories of childhood were powerless to blind him to the ugly facts of the present. He shrank from the whole household, from father and mother, and even from Muriel; spending his time in riding long distances, as if he could shake off the black care that clung to his saddle by the multiplication of the furlongs put between himself and Owllett—or turning round and round the park of Machells, mounting little eminences whence he could see the house and gardens, happy if he could speak to some of the labourers connected with the place, soothed if he could track the smoke of the chimneys against the sky, solaced if he could gather a few leaves from the woods which belonged to Hilda's father. The hours spent in the house were chiefly employed in writing alliterative poetry of which Hilda was the theme and where the feet were halting.

Muriel, on the contrary, had accepted without reserve this poor papa of theirs, whose unknown sorrows demanded such incessant tenderness and self-sacrifice. She saw him only as her mother presented him—as a gentle-natured saint, victim somehow of strange griefs and tyrannous circumstances; but a man eminently lovable, eminently noble, and above suspicion all round. It came in as a natural part of life that she had no chance given her of speaking of her engagement, or her promise to Arthur to abide by the choice and decision of love. Mrs. Smith would not allow her to approach the subject. She seemed to know by that fine instinct which made her, as it were, double-sensed, when the dangerous borders were neared; and she warded off her daughter's confidence as skilfully as she had always guarded her own. Either dear papa wanted her, and she must go to him at once; or really she must not interrupt her mother now at this moment when she had to attend to him; and once with more directness of application, when Derwent had announced his intention of writing to his uncle Louis for that appointment in the diplomatic service on which he had always counted, she said to Muriel that there could not possibly be a question of Derwent's leaving home just yet; dear papa was too fatigued to attend to anything—he wanted so much rest after all that he had undergone! Besides—pointedly—

it would be cruel to ask him to part with his boy almost as soon as he had seen him! She was sure, she went on to say, her beautiful eyes fixed imploringly on her daughter, that her beloved children would postpone their own affairs, however important, for just a few weeks till papa was fit to attend to them. Think how long it was since he had been at home, and what happiness it must be to him to have his darlings once more about him! Could they be so heartless as to interrupt this happiness?—break up this home the instant their long-time-exile had reached it?

Her appeals used to seal Muriel's lips and bring the tears to her eyes:—they were often now in the mother's, in spite of her frequent wild smiles and sometimes hysterical laughter; that icy self-control which she had maintained for so long seeming to be giving way at both points alike. There was nothing for it but constancy, determination, faith, and the girl's unspoken vow: 'Whatever happens I will be true to him. I am Arthur's now, and no one can separate us.'

And what was true with Muriel was true also with Derwent. The boy's magnificent assurance that he would make his mother consent to his sister's engagement with Arthur Machell, went the way of most young assurances—it evaporated into smoke and left no residuum of fact behind. Mrs. Smith simply refused to allow him to speak. Once or twice, when he began, she cut him short peremptorily, and would neither give nor receive any explanation whatsoever. It was not his business; she knew what she was about; Muriel understood her position and would do her duty; his entering on the question at all showed his ignorance of its bearings—with a thousand other reasons equally stringent and equally factitious. They answered their purpose, however; she stopped her son's mouth as she had already stopped her daughter's, and wept silently in the night for the heart-break to which she was condemning both.

As for the object of all these loving cares and tender devotion—the man who had been so long lost to his family, and who now when restored was so strangely silent as to his past history—the moral change to be expected from him was gradually making itself felt in his ways and manners. He had come crushed, humiliated, broken. His daughter's caresses had agonized him for shame at his unworthiness to receive them; his son's grave eyes had abashed him, as if he had been a young archangel touching the hidden sore of his soul; only his wife had been able to soothe him—only her love had not stung him as something worse than open contempt. Now he was beginning to feel himself to be, what that wife tried so hard to represent him, the victim of circumstance rather than

the author of his own sorry fate. He had been tempted and led astray by minds stronger and keener-sighted than his own; the evil then lay with them, not with him. He had sinned for a good motive—to keep his wife and children in the position to which they were entitled; judged by motives, he was not only blameless but praiseworthy;—and motives are true while facts are but appearances. And at the worst, his had been only a legal offence not a moral crime; and if he had sinned he had suffered.

So he reasoned, till the vanity which had always coloured his character came once more to the surface, and from the crushed humility of the first days shaped him into the very fair representation of a rather sad and saintly kind of English gentleman, with mysterious sorrows to be pitied and mysterious wrongs which he had forgiven.

Side by side with this weakness and vanity he had to perfection that class of virtues which chiefly delight women and render a man, contemptible among men, the idol of his home. He was sweet-tempered, affectionate, complaisant, and generous. His pleasure was to please; and if the return which he demanded was praise which ran into flattery, the accurate recognition of every smallest grace, and a rather appalling amount of personal caressing, these were taxes which both wife and daughter were willing to pay. The wife had shut her eyes to all but the sweeter qualities of the man who, she persuaded herself, had sacrificed himself to her; and the daughter was still under the spell of that childish remembrance by which her father had taken on himself the likeness of Sir Philip Sidney, aided by the charm and fascination of his present loving, tender, mournful, and sympathetic personality. Hence all went well with them, and it was only poor Derwent who suffered.

Meanwhile, Arthur Machell came and went without let or comment. He saw only Muriel and Derwent, for Mrs. Smith had become to him as invisible as her husband; but so long as he might have these long quiet talks with Muriel, hear her say again and again that she loved him and would never forsake him; make light of the difficulties besetting them; promise for a surety her mother's consent in due time; see her look into his eyes with her own so tender, faithful, frank; feel her gently return the pressure of his hand as he held hers so tightly clasped; feel her fresh lips shyly quiver beneath his own, when he kissed her for that sacred twice—once on coming and again on going—while he could thus strengthen and consolidate his love, he gave little heed to the present dumb negation of Muriel's parents, though in spite of all his promises the future active hostility of his own sometimes troubled him. For the former, Muriel would be of age in two

years' time ; and if two years are an eternity to a young man of twenty-four, passionately in love and not naturally patient, yet Arthur was both wise and strong, and could recognise that true love is worth a stern apprenticeship, and that a future with Muriel would be well bought by present pain. He would wait if need be, as he would hold his own against all opposition if need be ; and what is strength good for if it cannot stand a trial ?

Derwent too was genial and sympathetic, and if powerless to aid them as he had promised, stood by his sister and her lover gallantly. Not to take from the value of his better feeling, perhaps something was due to the fact that Arthur was the only link now remaining with Hilda, and represented to him a beauty and poetry of life that had somehow passed from him. That tender little love-poem of his had come abruptly to a close ; and like fastidious folk reduced by hunger, he was glad to welcome Arthur as the best substitute which he could have for Hilda.

The coolness which had sprung up between Machells and Owlett was marked enough ; though nothing overt had been said or done, and Sir Gilbert and Lady Machell, like all the world beside, had called on the invisible Mr. Smith. Still, things are in the air ; and that my lady was displeased with Derwent and Muriel was very patently in the air. It was not so much on account of things as they were, as for what they had been ; for in truth the excitement and business of all kinds attending Wilfrid's approaching marriage a little veiled the eyes of the watchful mother as to Arthur's present habits. At one time she would have noted his long absences—for the whole of the morning, or all the afternoon—with his evident preoccupation when at home ; and she would have soon found out the secret spring and have tracked the course without a break. Now she could not afford the time even to observe, still less to follow ; and if sometimes she felt the same deadly anxiety that she used to know, the next moment found her deep in plans and details which required all her attention to keep in hand.

And it was because of all that was pressing on her at this moment that Arthur kept silent as to his engagement with Muriel ; waiting until Wilfrid's affair should be finally over before opening what he knew would be the terrible fire of his own.

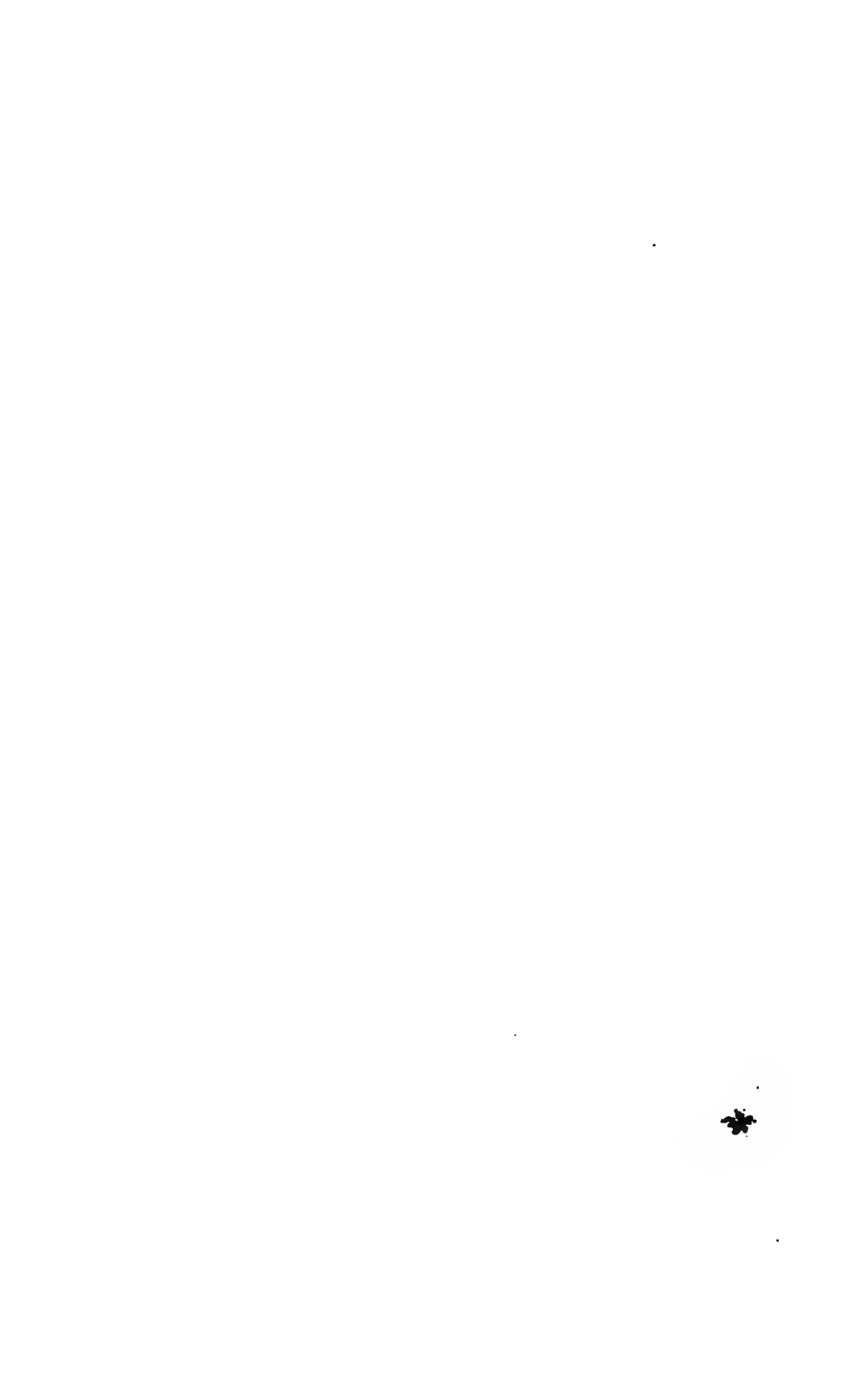
Another reason too why this, with other annoyances, fell into the background in my lady's mind, was because of Guy Perceval. He was so frequently at Machells now, and apparently so intent on forming Hilda after a secret model of his own mind, and if so, for sure purposes, that he had accustomed even Wilfrid to his presence, if his personality was still repugnant enough to the girl.

The Machell family was looking up in the world, and Guy put in his claim to share in the rehabilitation. Not that he was a time-server; but even honest gentlemen worship rising suns, and prosperity attracts friends as surely as a magnet gathers to itself steel filings.

Lady Machell was well content to keep the owner of the Manor as a prospective investment. She respected him honestly, and believed in his moral worth as she believed in the first chapter of Genesis and the final destruction of the earth by fire. His good heart and fair estate were better to her mind as clauses in the marriage settlement, than graceful manner or physical beauty; which last indeed she found it convenient to blaspheme as a wholly unimportant item in the furniture of a man—nay more—as marking a low and sensual nature should it be required as a condition of love, or too much admired when present. Yet she had married Sir Gilbert, and was the proud mother of Arthur. And as for the ‘crazes’ which had given Guy such an odd kind of notoriety, she had no doubt that she could do what she liked with them all, new or old, when he was her son-in-law. Nor had she any fear that Hilda’s fancy would flow into undesirable channels leading to disastrous outfalls, when she should be his well-dowered wife. She was too true a Machell, and had too much of the religion of pride and self-respect, ever to go wrong. Get only money and all the rest would come right, thought my Lady Machell of Machells, taught the exceeding value of wealth by years of penury and pinching. Get only money, you daughters of the nineteenth century, and love and honour and happiness will be slaves bound to the chariot wheels, compelled to follow; or—you can go through your triumph without them.

So matters stood for a short time; local history at this moment running fast; when one day—that inevitable day which always comes—Mr. Smith’s spell was broken, and the charmed invisibility in which he had lived since his return came to an end. It was Miss Forbes who first unearthed this shy wild game, hiding so closely behind the walls and in the woods of Owlett; and Miss Forbes was that unpaid, voluntary crier always found in small societies—what she knew the world very soon knew also, and sometimes with an appendix attached.

She and her sister came one day to Owlett to ask the young people to join in an afternoon, which Baby had arranged to give:—it was Baby who gave the girlish fêtes for which Tower was famous; Miss Dinah who organised the dinners, and took credit to herself for the larder and the cellar:—and they came upon the





HE WONE, AND MET THEIR EYES FIXED ON HIS!

mysterious master of the house as suddenly as the prince came on the sleeping beauty in the wood. This was Miss Aurora's simile after they left. Mrs. Smith and Muriel were out ; Derwent no one knew where, but in point of fact in his own room, suffering from a severe attack of gloom ; and Edmund Smith, fearing no evil, had wandered into the garden where, stretched on the seat under the tulip-tree, he had fallen asleep as he so often did. When he woke he found standing over him a coarse-featured, broadly-built, stalwart-looking woman of the hybrid species, with small keen eyes and a shrewd if heavy face. Near her was another woman like a faded wax doll draped in snippets of incongruous finery, peeping from behind this stalwart person's shoulder as an ingénue of fifteen might peep at that strange creature, half lovely, half frightful—a man. Both were gazing at the sleeper till, roused by that occult power of the human presence, he woke and met their eyes fixed on his.

There was no help for it. Flight, silence, concealment were alike impossible. The ordeal had come upon him, and he must meet it as bravely as he could. The instincts of a gentleman and the recollections of society came to his aid ; and if both were somewhat rusty from disuse, they were at least fairly serviceable and helped him with more or less good grace at a pinch. He received the ladies with only so much confusion tinging his courtesy as was but natural to a man found sleeping by strange women ; talked to them in vague generalities which kept him on the safe side of dangerous tracks—and as he talked to them freely he so far gained in their esteem. They saw nothing unpersonable in him, nothing suspicious, nothing to account for his persistent non-appearance, nor any basis whatsoever for any hypothesis. His seclusion was due then, as he said, simply to excessive fatigue consequent on long and continuous travel, and to the man's natural desire to be left quiet and undisturbed with his wife and family after an absence of so many years—so many that his children were practically strangers to him whom it was his first duty to learn.

It was all plain and evident enough ; and the Misses Forbes shook hands with him cordially, and thought that really he was a most charming person, very pleasant in his manners, and so like—like whom ? Not Derwent, and yet there was a strong resemblance to the boy ; nor Muriel, and yet there was a still stronger resemblance here too ; but this was not the likeness which had struck both ladies, and for which neither at the moment could find a name ; when suddenly, as they were driving home, Miss Aurora, who had that odd sharpness which sometimes belongs

to fools whereby they occasionally startle—and distance—the wise, cried out :

‘Diny! how like he is our Robert Rushton! Did you see it?’

‘So he is, Baby, and that’s it!’ answered Miss Forbes slapping her knee. ‘What a smart little angel you are!’

By the evening of the next day Miss Forbes had told the whole neighbourhood of her adventure; how she had found Mr. Smith asleep; how nice and ‘conversable’ he was; how much he seemed to have to say; how fond he was of his family; how he had evidently been a handsome man, but how haggard and ‘down’ he looked now; and really he was a very well-mannered person; winding up her narrative to each with the one same conclusion: ‘and the oddest likeness you can imagine to my man Bob Rushton!’

When his wife came home Edmund Smith told her on his side of the adventure that had befallen him in her absence, in terms which would have considerably enlightened Miss Forbes could she have heard them; terms of such terror and distress as went far beyond all apparent reason why. But Mrs. Smith’s calm face never changed from the quiet look of pleasant interest with which she listened to him.

‘Ah well, it is not to be regretted,’ she said when he had finished. ‘You must see your neighbours some time, dear love; it is only a question of time, and your feeling of unaccustomedness will soon wear off; it is only that, Edmund.’

‘Yes, I know; but the longer I can put off meeting the people the better,’ he answered, passing his hand over his oddly-cut hair, and the stubbly beard which he was cultivating with a shy lad’s secret assiduity.

She understood the gesture.

‘That dear head!’ she said, kissing it reverently.

If the sign of his shame, it was the symbol of her devotion; and the cross which he bore weeping she carried with him as proudly as if it had been the eagles of the triumphal procession wherein he received the honours which he had merited and gathered up the praises that he had earned.

CHAPTER XX.

SHOOTING OFF THE TIES.

It was a beautiful day for Miss Aurora’s garden-party. Baby always had Queen’s weather, Miss Forbes used to say fondly; as if the little one, as she sometimes called her, were a special favourite

with Providence, so that a neat series of cosmic miracles was wrought affecting the whole condition of things, because she had invited half-a-dozen idle people to shoot arrows at a bit of painted canvas at the end of an alley, or to drive a shuttlecock over a strip of netting strained on sticks across the lawn. Which is what the doctrine of Queen's weather comes to when dissected.

Being fine, all the world gathered as invited; including of course the young Smiths—Derwent looking very blank and wretched at the first, but warming as time went on—the Brown de Paumelles and the Machells. It was on account of these last two indeed, and the betrothal between their houses, that Miss Aurora had given the garden-party for which Providence had taken the trouble to secure uninterrupted sunshine. It was her contribution to the congratulations offered on the occasion; also her sop thrown to the curiosity of the place; for society at Grantley Bourne was by no means weary of watching the behaviour of these affianced lovers to each other, trying to find out if he did really care for that common-looking little thing—the majority affirming that he did not and could not; and if she could possibly love that heavy, plain, ill-tempered fellow whose tongue was as sharp as his face was sour—the majority here too saying that it was impossible.

They had enough to do in observing the lovers to-day, the gratuitous play offered for their amusement being rather richly mounted, all things considered. Between Jemima's spasmodic attempts at skittishness—coming so oddly in the midst of her normal shyness, and the one as full of awkwardness as the other—and Wilfrid's baffling stoicism, there was ample room for that ridicule which friends make it a matter of conscience to bestow on each other, and for the conjectures which are never so fruitful as when they have no solid foundation in fact.

Possessed by the belief that Wilfrid loved her for herself, and divided between abject fear of him as a man and the natural desire of an underbred girl to parade her conquest, Jemima executed a series of pantomimes which it took all the Machell philosophy based on the de Paumelle millions to bear with becoming fortitude. She called 'the Captain' to her with a jerky wave of her hand and a pecking movement of her head, irresistibly suggestive of a bird, and a bird only half-fledged; and when in obedience to her summons he had moved his tall frame near to her diminutive person, she laughed with that mixture of nervousness and silliness which is so irritating to a proud man made into a butt for contemptible jokers, and so idiotic in every sense, and told him she had nothing to say to him, and he might go home again the way

he came. She dropped her handkerchief by design, and bade him pick it up with what she thought was the pretty imperiousness of a spoilt beauty and an adored mistress; she sought to send him into temporary despair by making such eyes as she could command at Derwent Smith in spite of his standoffishness, as she called his pride and reserve, or by giggling with George Lucraft, a pert youth of the 'Arry species whom naturally she would have preferred for her companion and playmate to all others at Grantley Bourne; and when she thought that she had sufficiently bruised and broken her disheartened lover, to console him for her cruelty she gave him her fan to hold as she would have given a stick to a begging Newfoundland. If he laid it down to do some little service to Miss Aurora say—she, poor old dear, not too proud to accept crumbs where others had the loaf, kissing-crust and slice—she would take it up with what was her idea of saucy archness, misguided little girl, making believe to pout, as if Wilfrid Machell were no more formidable than that same honest 'Arry to whom nature had addressed her had not fortune stepped in and blotted out the label with her golden pen.

But at a glance from him—that grave, displeased glance which she had already learned and trembled under—her thin film of skittishness dissolved like snow beneath a shower, and she collapsed into the crushed condition natural to her. Then she would shrink away to her mother, and looking piteously into her face, say in a frightened whisper:

'Oh, ma! whatever shall I do? I've gone and offended the Captain, till he's as cross as cross, and I'm that frightened I scarcely know my head from my heels or which end I'm standing on!'

As she had none of that reticent self-control which comes mainly by the education of society, if sometimes it is natural and instinctive, the bystanders were made free of all the acts and scenes of the little drama as it was played between the two, and found in its fitful progress far more amusement than that which Miss Aurora had provided in the more legitimate ways of croquet and lawn-tennis, archery and *les grâces*.

But there was something else to watch—something beside the manners of Wilfrid Machell and Jemima Brown de Paumelle; and to the full as interesting. This was best expressed in the question put so severely by Mrs. Constantine to Mrs. Lucraft: 'What did Arthur Machell mean by the devoted attention which he was paying to Muriel Smith?' and by Mrs. Lucraft's characteristic answer: 'It looks like a case, surely!'

It was the first time that Arthur and Muriel had met in public since the famous ball which had given them to each other; the

first time that the mother had seen her favourite son with the girl whom she so specially feared since he had justified those fears and leaped into the abyss; and Arthur seemed bent on showing both the world and that mother how things stood between him and Muriel. If he had not cared to tell his people before now by reason of their preoccupation with Wilfrid's affairs, he was far from intending to conceal the truth when he had a natural opportunity for declaring it. And it must be confessed that he declared it broadly enough.

His mother's displeasure, ill-concealed from the world and so evident to him, at first shown only in the look of her eyes and the tone of her voice; her whispered remonstrances, stern, pleading, angry as he grew more demonstrative and she more convinced; her endeavours to detach him from Muriel now on one plea and now on another, and none successful; Wilfrid's sarcastic comments, and that assumption of the elder brother's superiority so galling to a young fellow like Arthur, high-spirited but well-bred, and in the presence of the woman whom he loves and who loves him; Miss Dinah's winks and nudges, coarse hints and questionable jokes; Miss Aurora's gushing sympathy, which perhaps made the broadest trail of all—nothing touched him, nor indeed seemed to be seen by him. He still went on as he had begun, talking only to Muriel, and taking exclusive possession of her in that natural way of attention which seemed to assume the right to adjust her gloves, her belt, her armlet for the archery—to be her partner in croquet—to coach her in badminton—handing her over to her brother on loan, and to be taken care of for him till he could claim her again, when he was forced to leave her for a moment—standing between her and all intruders of either sex as a man does when he has taken a woman by the royal right of love to be his own.

Not the most artfully planned manœuvres lured him from his post or got the better of his determination. Even when Hilda was confided to his care in the archery-ground—she being the sacred oriflamme of the Machells, the temporary guardian of whom was assumed to be solemnly consecrated to her exclusive service for the time being—while my lady went into the house for the one circumstance of personal refreshment to which she was a slave, that indispensable four o'clock cup of tea, even then he kept himself to Muriel as before, and delivered up Hilda to the care of Derwent. It is only fair however to say that he suspected no more how things were between his little sister and the boy, than this latter had suspected how they had been between him and Muriel. Loving Muriel even as he did, and prepared to stand by that love in the presence of all powers and against the pressure of all influences, he would yet have

hesitated before—as yet—countenancing a like affair between those other two. He might take whom he would; but Hilda's husband must be one whose alliance would exalt, not depreciate, her personal value; and Muriel's brother was not of such circumstance or character as would satisfy a Machell in the candidate for the hand of the daughter of the house.

All this however was in the clouds and the winds, and the only thing real and tangible was that he, Arthur Machell, was in love with and engaged to Muriel Smith, and meant to hold what he had got and fulfil what he had promised; that his people had to make up their minds to accept what they could not refuse; that when he was determined he was also immovable; and that a sunny temper and facile kind of outside nature in a man are quite compatible with an iron will when a resolution is once taken—and the object of it is a woman.

Lady Machell was more disturbed to-day than she had been for years. She was very angry with Arthur, very bitter and unjust to Muriel after the manner of mothers in general when their sons love for love and not by prudence; but she was still more angry with herself in that she had not checked with a high hand when she first suspected it this mad passion which, ruining her best, would make even Wilfrid's gain no better than a loss. She was his mother; he had always been loving and dutiful; had she taken it at the first she could have prevented and conquered. Now perhaps it was too late. His manner to Muriel, tender, devoted, was more assured than is the manner of a man who is still only seeking and has not yet won; and hers to him had something of the happy rest of confession, something of the peace of certainty, if also tinged with the confusion, the strangeness, the shy exaltation of a love that is not acknowledged to the world. The way in which he braved the curious glances of the people about and set loose their idle tongues, also was sufficient indication to one who could read by signs; and as the day wore on Lady Machell had simply to watch and be confirmed—Arthur as pleasant, smiling, and affectionate to herself as usual, but utterly untouched by her displeasure and indifferent to her desires.

They were all in the avenue where the targets were set, Muriel and Hilda the best players on the ladies' side as Arthur and Derwent were on the men's. It was an accomplishment in which poor little Jemima was even more deficient than that of keeping accurate time with her feet to music set in three-four measure; but she sat near her mother under the tree, having exhausted her little stock of pretensions and being now subdued and inoffensive. And she was better pleased to be left there quietly as Jemmy

with her poor old ma, than if she had been called on to take a part among the swells.

The four crack shots, as Miss Dinah called them, were shooting with the two divisions of course; but there was every chance of the match soon centring in themselves and their respective ties. And indeed it came to this soon after Wilfrid was out of the field, having shot away his last arrow into space, and so losing the score. His aim was destroyed by a sudden flash across his eyes, as he saw Arthur adjust Muriel's finger-stalls, and hold her hand longer than was at all necessary, looking into her face the while—she looking up once into his—with what the dullest must have seen was love in both. Wilfrid's arrow went wide as his eyes flashed and his heavy face contracted with a jealous man's sudden pain; and soon after this the best four were left to themselves to shoot off the ties—Muriel and Hilda having scored even, and Derwent and Arthur.

Then came Miss Aurora's shrill screams of delight as she flitted to and fro, apparently in a state of the wildest excitement; offering bets of macaroons and sugar-plums on Arthur and Muriel, declaring mysteriously that if they won something else would happen—taking this as the sign. She would not say what this something was, but it was something very nice and pretty—dancing her curls and laughing—they would soon learn all about it; she had, long ago!—and so perhaps had they.

'But I don't see why the others should not have their chance as well—a double event, don't you call it then?' cried Miss Aurora, who had, as has been said before, that odd occasional sharpness which sometimes characterises fools. 'We should have all our belles and beaux matched then.'

'Not all, Baby,' said Miss Dinah with meaning. 'I know one little belle that would be kept out of the fire.'

On which Miss Aurora laughed with a good imitation of embarrassment; and the guests laughed too, but whispered to each other behind their fans and hands that really these old women were the most ridiculous creatures in existence, and that it was hard to say which was the sillier of the two.

Suddenly a thought struck Miss Aurora's brain. With a sly look and a shrill laugh she ran through the avenue, catching Guy Perceval by the way, till she came to the flower-beds on the lawn. Here she clapped her hands and set all her curls and ribbons, her bows and ends and flowers and jingling chains and charms in motion, while she flitted about among the beds, gathering flowers with the glee of a child, and as she thought with the grace of a nymph.

'Hold the basket, like a dear man,' she said girlishly to the master of the Manor. 'I am going to make a consolation-prize.'

She chose her flowers quickly—a delicate moss-rose bud, a pansy, jessamine, and forget-me-nots; and, as she was deft with her fingers, she soon twisted up a bunch of jessamine with a purple pansy in the centre for the one, of forget-me-nots surrounding a moss-rose bud just opening for the other. She then tied each with rather broad white ribbon, the bows and ends of which she made conspicuous and significant; and ran back into the avenue—the wind blowing her scanty tresses from her face and giving her a scraped and touzled look, which she thought must be delightfully suggestive of youth, nature, the wild woods, fawn-like nymphs, and the like, all represented and reproduced in her. Of a surety that famous giftie, which is granted to so few, had never been assigned to Miss Aurora Forbes!

Meanwhile, the ties had been shot off; the contest ending by Arthur on his side and Muriel on hers winning the highest score. They carried the heaviest metal, as Miss Dinah said; and the heaviest metal tells in the long run. But it was quite right; just as it should be, she had added with a wink; and she was sure that Dimples for one was not displeased with things as they were, nor, she would be sworn, was her gallant young soldier, Mr. Arthur.

‘And you two are just as well matched, and make just as nice a couple!’ cried Miss Aurora gushingly to Derwent and Hilda, standing near together; he excusing his defeat and showing how it was due to accident—pure accident—and not to his own comparative deficiency; she, secretly more annoyed than she cared to show, but, always remembering the obligations of good-breeding and her Machellhood, congratulating dear Muriel on her greater skill in the sweetest way possible. ‘Look!’ continued the gay young creature, ‘I have made a consolation-prize—one for each. Have I not chosen well for you?’ she added archly, as she gave Derwent the forget-me-nots round the moss-rose bud, and to Hilda the jessamine with its central purple pansy.

‘That is just like you, Miss Aurora, always so kind and thoughtful! I will keep mine for all my life as an emblem,’ cried Derwent with the ecstatic look of a youthful poet who has seen something rare and beautiful; while Hilda, passing the tip of her little finger caressingly over the pansy, said with charming simplicity, but warmly:

‘What a beauty this is!’

‘Yes,’ said Miss Aurora twining her arms round the slender waist of the pretty little girl; ‘two rosebuds on one stem. I thought it looked like Mr. Derwent, proud and princely and velvety, you know; just as that dear little moss-rose looked like you, you precious little thing. You see I gave you to each other, you

dear things; you look such a sweet pair!' And then she laughed, while Hilda stole a glance up at Derwent, who was still in that state when glances go for words and a smile is equal to a promise.

'I would rather have my defeat, our defeat, and our consolation-prizes than any victory in the world,' he said in a low voice to Hilda. 'It is in itself the greatest victory.'

'It is very pretty,' she answered smiling. 'I am so fond of forget-me-nots. They go so well with roses.'

'So I think,' he answered with meaning. 'And are you fond of pansies too?'

'Yes; and this is a darling,' she answered.

He took it from her hands as if to examine it, and gave his own to her; he was obliged to be careful, wily, more than circumspect, with all the eyes that were about them. As things looked, it was only a boy and girl comparing toys.

When they restored each bouquet to its proper owner, Derwent bent his head and whispered: 'Now you have given yourself to me, and have accepted me. Have you not?'

'Yes, these are my flowers, and those are yours,' answered Hilda just as her mother told Guy Perceval, sharply, to bring her daughter to her; and Guy thrusting himself between the children, as Miss Aurora called them, offered Hilda his arm to take her to Lady Machell coming down the avenue from her afternoon tea.

'If you were wise, Miss Hilda, you would not encourage that forward young man's attentions,' said Guy in his high-pitched voice, as he led her off, triumphant for his own part but as a captive to her thinking. 'It is young men like him who play the mischief with a girl's life and prospects.'

'I do not know what you mean,' said Hilda Machell, opening her eyes to their fullest and looking up with the loveliest expression of childlike candour.

'I am glad to hear it,' he answered. 'It is better for you that you do not. But what you do not understand for yourself you must let your friends arrange for you.'

'I shall be very glad,' said Hilda prettily. 'I should be very sorry to have to manage things for myself.'

And Guy Perceval, looking into her sweet, childish, candid face, thought that the purity, softness, tenderness, and womanly charm which he had once so much admired in Muriel Smith were repeated here in Hilda Machell with even greater loveliness; and that on the whole the latter was the more desirable creature of the two, Lady Machell as against Mrs. Smith counting at least for honours in the game.

But Derwent, emboldened by the state of things between Arthur and Muriel, a little thrown off his balance by Miss Aurora's injudicious sympathy, and for the moment forgetful of his father and the terrible suspicion of slave-dealing hanging about him, followed Hilda to the sacred fastness of her mother's presence, where, taught craft by love, he bore Lady Machell's well-bred snubs with such unruffled good humour, paying her such devoted attention as he stood in a gentleman-in-waiting kind of attitude by her chair, and looking the while so supremely handsome and picturesque that in spite of herself he softened her, so far as she herself was concerned, and made her feel really humane and almost maternal towards him. But when she thought of him as an admirer, perhaps an aspirant for Hilda, she longed for the olden times which gave the power of *lettres de cachet* to the blue blood when intrusive plebeians laid their unwelcome hands on the ark of the anointed, and dared to believe that a man's worth was equal to a parchment patent. So that her manners were a curious mixture of softness and anger in rapid alternation; but as Guy Perceval was mounting guard over Hilda, and not a look could pass between her and her young detrimental without being intercepted by the way, my lady yielded by fine degrees to that feminine quality which always does make women yield, by fine degrees or otherwise, to the insistence of a handsome man laying himself out to win favour; and poor Derwent felt that all was won because Lady Machell smiled twice as she spoke to him, and once by misadventure called him 'Derwent.'

As for the quarrel between him and Guy, it had passed into that state of things so well known in small societies, when Guy as the elder cut Derwent, and Derwent as the younger ignored Guy. The two met but did not speak; and each went through the fiction of assuming that the other did not exist. Sometimes indeed Guy talked at Derwent, and sometimes Derwent fulminated over the head of Guy; but for the most part they met in silence and parted in disdain, and spared the world about them the trouble of considering the merits of the case.

Flitting to and fro among her guests, Miss Aurora finally perched on the arm of a garden seat where Arthur and Muriel were sitting.

'Miss Muriel,' she said gaily, 'I want your help.'

'Yes?' said Muriel, smiling.

'I am gathering rose-leaves for my *pot-pourri*—will you come and help me?'

'Willingly,' said Muriel, suspecting nothing. 'When?'

'To-morrow,' said Miss Aurora. 'Will you and your brother come to luncheon? or after? which you like; only come;' giggling.

'We will come after,' answered Muriel, thinking of her father.
'We can do a great deal in an afternoon.'

'A rose-leaf and jessamine bee!' cried Miss Aurora girlishly.
'What a charming idea! is it not, Mr. Arthur?'

'So charming that I think I shall join you,' was his answer.

Muriel looked up at him, and Miss Aurora clapped her hands.

'Do!' she cried: 'but please don't tell—don't tell anybody.
I want to have it all to myself; a nice little select party of flower-gatherers.'

'It will be delightful,' said Muriel.

'The best idea I have heard for a long time,' added Arthur.

'Well then, it is agreed; you will all three come?'

'Yes, Derwent and I will,' said Muriel.

'And you may count on me,' said Arthur.

'And you will not tell?'

'Not a soul!'

'No!' laughed Muriel. 'We will keep it a dead secret.'

'So sweet of you!' gurgled Miss Aurora as she fluttered off, leaving the lovers to themselves, and making them understand her good intentions by saying as her parting salute: 'Now I will leave you, you dear things. I am sure you would rather be to your two selves than with a tiresome third to interfere! Oh! don't say no, Muriel! I can see as well as my betters!' with a playful jingle of her earrings, and an airy dancing of her feathery tresses, as she emphasised her words by a shrill peal of laughter.

She then skirmished in her light way into the Machell quartette under the trees, intent on giving all the young people a chance, and thinking to play the part of a benevolent fairy by helping on their love affair, whether wise or unwise, likely to come to good and solid issues or to end in smoke and despair. Indeed she was at all times the benevolent fairy bent on helping all love affairs whatsoever; and next to having adorers at her own feet, liked to lay cushions handy for adorers at the feet of others.

'Come and take a little turn with me,' she said, putting her hand through Hilda's arm. 'I declare I have not spoken a word to you all the day. I hope you have enjoyed yourself, you dear little thing, but I have been really most cruelly neglectful of you!'

On which she led the girl down the avenue, and when well out of hearing said:

'What a lovely bracelet you have, dear! I have never seen it before. How pretty! Where did you buy it? Who gave it to you?'

It was a pretty little bracelet of Swiss enamel;—roses and forget-me-nots, like Derwent's bouquet.

'Wilfrid gave it to me,' said Hilda.

Miss Aurora unclasped it from her arm.

'How very lovely!' she cried enthusiastically. 'What a sweet pattern! Would you mind lending it to me to copy? Just for to-night; I will not keep it longer. Come for it to-morrow after luncheon. Ask your brother, Mr. Arthur, to bring you. Can you?'

'I dare say mother will let me come,' the girl answered with one sharp glance at the kindly, weak, and waggish face of this antiquated Mercury accredited by Venus, this faded sympathiser with rosebuds and young love. 'I wonder why,' she thought to herself; but as life was rather dull for Hilda in the ordinary run of things, she was by no means disposed to be critical about the mouths of her gift-horses.

'Then you will come?' asked Miss Aurora.

'If mother will let me,' answered Hilda.

'Ask her prettily to-morrow, you little dear,' said the elder.

'Not to-day?' returned the girl innocently.

'No, not to-day; you see she might be anxious about your bracelet—think perhaps I meant to steal it'—laughing a little idiotically—'but to-morrow. Don't you see?'

'Yes,' said Hilda demurely; 'so I will.'

With this they went back to the group under the trees, just as Lady Machell had risen to say good-bye to Miss Forbes and Mrs. Brown de Paumelle.

'Come, Hilda!' she said a little sharply, 'I am waiting for you.'

'Yes, mother,' answered Hilda meekly. 'I am so sorry that I have kept you.'

'That child has the germ of a most remarkably sweet woman in her,' thought Guy Perceval approvingly.

'What an angel of beauty and goodness she is!' thought Derwent with unnecessary emotion.

'Wilfrid,' said Lady Machell in a low stern agitated whisper; 'make your brother walk home with you; and for God's sake speak to him before he has ruined himself for life.'

'It is too late, mother,' said Wilfrid heavily; 'but I will do what I can.'

The company now began to melt away, and soon all had gone save Wilfrid and Arthur Machell, when the elder, going over to his brother, said in a strange voice:

'I am walking, Arthur; will you come with me?'

'Willingly,' said Arthur quickly, smiling and setting his *shoulders square*.

His hour had come, and he was not sorry to begin the struggle. He was grieved for them all, and for the annoyance that he was about to give them; but it could not be helped, and in time they would be reconciled. His mother's displeasure was the penalty attached to the exquisite prize that he had won; but no penalty could overmatch the value of that prize; and if the whole world had to be lost for the gaining of Muriel, he felt that, as he had said to Mrs. Smith, it would be the world well lost. Had he spoken the truth, as men do not and dare not speak it, Wilfrid would have answered Amen.

CHAPTER XXI.

HIS ELDER BROTHER.

'I THOUGHT you would have said something to me before now about my marriage,' Wilfrid began with a slight accent of surprise artificially laid on his voice, one less slight of displeasure that was not artificial.

'It was rather difficult to know what to say,' returned Arthur candidly.

'Why?'

'Well, you know, frankly, Will, it is scarcely the kind of thing one would have expected from you,' he answered.

'No; as how, pray?' with disagreeable politeness.

'Oh, nothing against them all morally; nothing against her personally; but it is not the kind of thing all round that I should have thought you would have done—not the choice that I should have expected from you anyhow.'

'So you think that I have chosen?' Wilfrid asked with an odd emphasis.

'I do not suppose you would let anyone choose for you,' returned his brother.

'Anyone; perhaps not. But circumstances might, necessity might.'

'I cannot quite see it,' said Arthur. 'A man ought to be the master of his own fate, and I cannot understand sacrifice when a little energy on one's own part would bring things straight.'

'Could it?'

'Yes,' said the younger brother firmly; 'a man's courage and energy can always pull him through.'

'How in my case, Arthur?—in ours, I should say.'

'I am not prepared with a scheme off-hand like this,' he answered. 'One cannot build up a theory, mark out a career, all in a moment; but if it had been my affair I would have done something—anything—rather than have married for money against my

inclination. For that is what it comes to, Will, if as you say necessity and not yourself has chosen your wife.'

'I do not doubt you, Arthur. This is just what I believe of you,' said Wilfrid sarcastically. 'But you see a man must sacrifice his inclination at times for higher duties; and we Machells must.'

'We Machells need not,' said Arthur hastily. 'While there is a man's life to be lived out of England I would not lead a slave's in it.'

'That means in plain words that you prefer inclination to duty, and yourself to your family.'

'I prefer work and the woman I love to money and a woman I do not love,' he answered.

'Most men would. It is only a question of which is the right thing for others,' Wilfrid said with meaning. 'Surely you cannot think that I like the marriage I am about to make?' he went on with rising bitterness. 'What you said just now is only too true—for herself, poor little soul, she is the last woman in the world that I would have chosen, and her people the last with whom I would have associated myself, had I been a free agent. But I am not. I owe myself to my family, as you do. Our first duty is to our own people, and to our name.'

'I am half glad, if sorry for you, Will, that you have chosen as you have out of what I think is a mistaken idea of your duty, and not after your own idea of what is best for yourself,' Arthur replied, skirting by the injunction.

'Having chosen however, I stand by my choice and shall make the best of it,' said Wilfrid steadily. 'She shall never know what it has cost me;—as one other shall never know.'

His voice did not break nor tremble as he said this. It only deepened into that kind of monotone which expresses with some as much pain as others express by their tears.

Arthur looked up, and the eyes of the brothers met.

'What other?' asked the younger in frank surprise.

Wilfrid was notoriously reticent in his family, and as notoriously commonplace and unsentimental. He was supposed to be incapable of an idealism of any kind; to be only the plain, practical, hard-headed Englishman, leading a decorous public life supplemented by one in private, perhaps not so decorous, where his own will stood for both law and Gospel; and to find him now with a romance on the one hand and prepared to tell it on the other, was something that surprised his brother beyond the half-natural self-deception common to brothers, who think that they know all about everything, and therefore see nothing so very wonderful when that everything comes out.

'What other?' he repeated.

'That is nothing to the purpose,' answered Wilfrid; 'but I will tell you something that may be of use to you in forming your own decision in life. I am not a man to talk much of myself, as you know, or to make a parade of my feelings. Whether I suffer or am happy—happy! who is?' he broke in bitterly—'is generally unknown to anyone; but'—he stopped for a moment, and his heavy face grew paler and more leaden-coloured than before. This was the only sign that he gave of the pain which had gathered round his heart; and his hesitation of speech was but for an instant. He had wrestled too long with pain and himself to give way now; and there was also a certain feeling of pride in being able to conquer himself, which the self-controlled know if they do not confess—a certain feeling of contempt for the ignorance of their companions as to the inner truth of things, which helps proud souls as a tonic helps weak bodies. 'I want to tell you now,' he went on to say, 'that although I am marrying Miss de Paumelle, I love one whom I cannot marry, as few men in the world have loved, or can. But I have never shown what I feel. To what use? She has no fortune, and Machells has to be redeemed. I have seen her at times almost daily, and I have seen other men about her whom I know I could have cut out; yet I have let her drift from me in silence, remembering my duty to my family and to her. And now I am putting this marriage as an eternal barrier between us, with the feeling of going down alive into the grave. And what I can do others can, and ought.'

'You are a fine fellow, Will, and I respect you more than I ever did before,' said Arthur warmly; 'but I do not agree with you. You sacrifice your own happiness, and perhaps that of another—if she would have loved you as you say, not perhaps, but certainly—and you are marrying a woman who, let you be as kind to her as you like, will find out sooner or later that you do not love her and that you have taken her for her money; and all for what?'

'For what is more to the life of a man than the love of any one woman in the world,' said Wilfrid; 'for the sake of honour and duty, and the good of my people if not for my own individual happiness.'

'Well, be it so. If you think this, you have your reward,' Arthur answered. 'You are the eldest son; you inherit Machells; you hold the family name in trust, and are our great man in the county;—you give up love for ambition and a woman for money. Perhaps you are right; in your position at all events; but right or wrong, you have both your object and your compensation. An eldest son has duties which we younger ones have not, just as you

have privileges and advantages which we have not. Things equalise themselves, and neither has all the plums.'

'A family hangs together. It is not centred in the eldest son. We are two brothers, Arthur, and we have our father and mother, and sister, in common.'

'You have made the sacrifice of yourself for them and Machells,' returned Arthur. 'All that is wanting for the old name and place you have got now.'

'A sacrifice for you to profit by? I thought you were a man of higher spirit than this,' sneered Wilfrid coldly. 'You have always posed for a rather remarkable amount of honour and independence. I should scarcely have expected that you would have made your own gain out of another man's loss.'

'I do not make gain out of your loss, Will. This marriage does not touch me anywhere. If it gave you more millions than it does, I would not ask you for the loan of a hundred pounds to float myself with. I would do just as I should if you had married without sixpence—that woman you love—and, to be as frank with you as you have been to me, as I shall do.'

'Will you tell me how it is to be done? You have decided on marrying without money, but as you cannot live without it you must have some plan in your head, I suppose, for getting it. Bread and meat are necessities, and ravens are out of fashion.'

'My plan is a very simple one,' answered Arthur. 'Australia.'

'The bush?'

'The bush if I can do nothing better.'

'And your wife?' He could not bring himself to say Muriel, to indicate his knowledge by name. 'Is she to be the typical bushman's wife?—to cook and bake and wash and scrub, with half a dozen young barbarians sprawling in the mud in as many years? Is this the condition to which your idea of the best kind of manly love will bring her? It seems to me that the truer manliness would be to give her up altogether rather than drag her down into such degradation as this.'

'I will try not to drag her down, nor yet to degrade her,' said Arthur with a heightened colour, but keeping his calmness. 'And perhaps——'

'Perhaps! A man founds his life on a 'perhaps'! What childishness!' interrupted Wilfrid scornfully.

'Not a bad foundation if it means hope with a strong dash of certainty and a resolute determination not to be beaten,' he replied good-humouredly. 'At all events perhaps—which means a great deal with me, Will—I shall not take Muriel to the bush, nor set her to the work of a common servant. One can give up the super-

fluous softnesses of an old civilisation without plunging into the poverty of savage life. There are middle ways, and I mean to take one of them.'

Wilfrid's face changed, and for a moment he could not speak. Something rose into his throat that choked his voice, strong as he was and used to self-control. But the rush of passion, despair, hatred for his brother's love and contempt for his weakness in yielding to it, which suddenly swept over him, were too much for him, and he was silent from very inability to speak. At last he said :

'You are determined to marry her?'

'Determined,' said Arthur.

'At all costs?'

'At all.'

'And she?'

'Will keep as true to me as I to her.'

'My mother's opposition will do nothing?'

'Nothing.'

'You will force on your family a woman whom they will not receive?'

'No, I will not force her on you. I will take her away. You will not have the chance of rejecting her,' said Arthur, dropping the frank good-humour which until now he had maintained, and turning on Wilfrid with as much steady pride and burning passion, as much undisguised disdain and haughty resoluteness as his own. 'Her association with you, Will, is the last thing you need fear!'

Wilfrid, usually so sparing of his words, so quick to recognise the futility of talk and the right of a man to his own life, seemed suddenly afflicted with a woman's pertinacity. His irritation against his brother overpowered him, and he lost both his good sense and self-command.

'You are really contemptible, Arthur!' he said angrily. 'You give up the man's life for the boy's; your position as an English gentleman, your family name, your future—and hers—all you throw to the winds for a boyish passion which better men than you have both felt more deeply and conquered more nobly.'

'Put it as you like so far as I am concerned,' said Arthur with an effort. 'There are always two ways of putting everything, and if you leave her alone I can bear your hard words for myself.'

He meant to come out of the fray victorious, but it was difficult.

'Yes, there are two ways—the right and the wrong; and yours is the wrong,' answered Wilfrid.

'As we cannot agree on that, we might as well drop the conver-

sation,' said Arthur. 'We understand each other, and further talk is useless.'

'If you had had patience for a month or two, until I had got things a little settled, I would have made your fortune with my own,' said Wilfrid, a little grandly.

'Thanks. You were always good; but I do not want any man to make my fortune,' said Arthur quickly. 'I prefer to make my own. I can work; and I would rather work for myself than buy idleness with old Brown de Paumelle's money.'

'It seems to me, Arthur, that you have stored all your honour and high spirit in the wrong places,' burst out Wilfrid irritably. 'What you might accept without loss of dignity you reject, and what you ought not to do, if you were governed by any of the common-sense principles of an honourable man, that you cling to as the sign of your independence. I thought you had been less of a boy by now.'

'Look here, Will,' said Arthur, 'this has lasted long enough. Drop it now. You have done your elder-brother duty by trying to persuade me against my marriage, and you have not succeeded; so now—basta! We are brothers; but we are men; and the limit has been reached.' Then in quite another tone and manner he said, after a moment's pause: 'Have you fixed the date of your marriage, Will? When is it to be?'

'The fifth of September,' said Wilfrid, following his brother's lead with sudden coolness. 'I shall have the birds, as we go to Scotland for the month. There will be only a week to wait.'

Then the conversation fell on to a thousand different subjects which served as fencework between the brothers and danger until they reached Machells, when the interview, which was to have done so much and which did so little, came to an end, leaving Arthur confessedly engaged to Muriel Smith, and the family, as represented by Wilfrid, distinctly opposed to the marriage.

'Did you speak to your brother?' asked Lady Machell, meeting Wilfrid in the hall.

'It is too late,' he answered curtly. 'He is engaged, and his mind is made up.'

'Then I will prevent it,' said my lady, instinctively stiffening her tall figure and bringing her lips into a thin line.

'You may spare yourself the trouble, mother,' returned her son. 'Arthur is a Machell, and recognises nothing stronger than his own will.'

'He shall recognise his mother's power,' was her reply, made proudly as Arthur came through the doorway, wondering at that

moment for how long the old home would remain open to him, now that his contumaciousness was fully acknowledged.

Nothing however was said, and to all appearance the hatchet was buried under the softest layer of moss and flowers that could be made out of fraternal accord and family peace. Hilda played some accompaniments, and her brothers sang bass and baritone to her small but pure soprano; Sir Gilbert and my lady had their time-honoured rubbers of *écarté*, followed by cribbage and then by *bésique*; and save that a certain air of artificiality was in the calm which reigned everywhere, the evening passed like a domestic idyll all the personages of which were unconscious of present danger or future disturbance. It was a well-acted little drama of pretence—one of those which it makes people angry to call by their right name, but which, under various mountings, possess the stage of human life to the exclusion of that unwelcome intruder, sincerity—that offspring of *Ithuriel*, lauded as a virtue in heaven but treated as a crime on earth.

The next morning passed in the same kind of lull which is more dangerous than discussion when cross-winds and counter-currents are about. Everything was almost oppressively sweet and waxy. No one said a disagreeable word or broached a hazardous subject; though, for the matter of that, no one touched an honest one; for, save Sir Gilbert, who was content that his clever wife should manage events when they did not manage her, everyone was thinking of things to which no vocal shape could be given save at the cost of blowing up the whole temple of peace which they had built so laboriously, and leaving themselves confessed for what they were—kinsmen at feud with each other. As this would have been premature, things went well together till luncheon was over, and then Lady Machell, who had ordered the pony carriage betimes, announced her intention of driving herself alone to Owlett. As she said this she looked full at Arthur, watching to see how he would take what she felt to be the first shot fired. For all demonstration he turned rather quickly to his brother and said:

‘You were my interpreter, Will?’

‘Yes,’ was the reply.

‘All right,’ said Arthur, getting up from the table and going round to his mother. ‘Dear mother,’ he said in a low but clear voice, ‘I am sorry to do anything to grieve you; believe me that I am. But there are moments in a man’s life when he must grieve his people, if they set themselves against him; and this is one of them.’

‘When they set themselves against him!—when he opposes,

insults, and destroys them you mean, Arthur !' said Lady Machell angrily. Suddenly changing her tone, she added : ' Do not let us discuss that now ; we will wait for the end.'

' Yes, let us wait for the end. Only promise me, mother, to be reconciled to me when that end does come !' said Arthur lovingly.

' I promise nothing,' she answered in a hard tone. ' I know only the disgrace and madness of the present.'

He took his hand from her shoulder where he had laid it. For himself he could bear much ; but when their words hit Muriel, then his blood was aflame, and he knew nothing but that he was her champion against the world—neither sister nor mother, neither family nor fortune, so near to him or so precious as her beloved self.

' Disgrace !' he said ; ' what do you mean, mother ? Will it be a disgrace to her to be allied to us ? There can be none coming from her to us !'

' You are mad !' said Lady Machell with an uncontrollable burst of angry contempt : ' these pitiful ravings of a love-sick boy !'

' Mad as all men are mad, mother, who choose for themselves against the world, and prefer truth and love to money and class ambition.'

' Who prefer their own selfish desires, their own wicked indulgence to duty,' returned Lady Machell, as Wilfrid had said before her. ' You have lost your perception of truth, Arthur, with your sense of duty and honour.'

' You will think better of me in time, mother,' was his reply. ' I can trust to time—and the mother's heart.'

Saying which he once more laid his hand on her shoulder with a caressing gesture, and left the room, Sir Gilbert looking at him as he passed, without a muscle of his face moving but a world of love shining in his quiet eyes, and Lady Machell, choking back her tears, confessing to herself that she had taken nothing by her move and that she had but one chance left—Mrs. Smith of Owlett.

' If you do not want me for anything, mother, may I go to Tower for my bracelet ?' asked Hilda, looking up suddenly and speaking in her innocent way as if she had heard nothing that had gone on, and had just wakened out of a dream. She had that way of springing her little requests on her people. It was one of her ideas that it was safest to give no time for consideration ; and that it is easier to snatch a Yes than to work for it.

' What about your bracelet ?' asked Lady Machell sharply. Her eyes were full of hot tears for grief and anger at Arthur's mad-

ness, and it was a relief to turn against her daughter who had done nothing wrong—but who might, who knows?

‘Miss Aurora took it to copy the pattern, and told me to call for it to-day,’ returned Hilda meekly.

‘It is the first I have heard of it,’ my lady said still more sharply.

‘Yes,’ said Hilda sweetly. ‘I did not say anything about it till I saw what you were going to do, and whether you wanted me or not. If you do not, shall I go for it? I do not like to let her have it so long; and perhaps Arthur will go with me.’

‘Is any one to be there?’ asked my lady, still unpleasantly.

She was in one of her porcupine moods, and not easily handled.

‘Not that I know of. It is only to get my bracelet,’ replied the child with childish simplicity.

Lady Machell looked at Wilfrid. Hilda followed her eyes.

‘You come with me, Wilfrid,’ she said prettily, knowing that he was engaged to go to Paumelle House, and conscious that her mother trusted him more than she trusted Arthur. Her request for his escort was, she knew, suggestive of safety.

‘I would if I could, little one,’ he answered kindly; ‘but I am engaged.’

‘Shall I let her go with Arthur?’ asked my lady doubtfully.

That favourite son of hers had fallen terribly low in her esteem of late, and Wilfrid, who had acted as a Machell and a man of honour should, had risen in proportion.

‘It will be a pleasant little walk for her,’ said Wilfrid, who never could refuse his sister anything; ‘there can be no harm in it.’

‘Yes, you may go, Hilda,’ repeated Lady Machell not too graciously; ‘that is, if Arthur will go with you. Perhaps he has other engagements!’ scornfully.

‘I will ask him,’ said Hilda, rising from her chair and gliding out of the room with her smooth unhurried step, but skipping gaily through the hall so soon as the door was safely shut between her and her mother, more like an ordinary girl released from restraint and glad of the prospect of a pleasant afternoon, than like Hilda Machell as she was being made by training and the severity of polite discipline.

Running lightly down the long north passage till she came to the ‘boys’ study,’ as the end room was called, she opened the door and thrust in her pretty richly-coloured curly head.

‘Arthur, are you here?’ she said.

‘Yes, come in Lil,’ he answered, putting back into his pocket-

book the photograph of Muriel which he had been studying as if it were something new and unknown.

‘I want you to come with me to Tower,’ said Hilda when she entered. ‘Miss Aurora took my bracelet to copy, and said that I was to go for it this afternoon. Will you come with me like a dear boy? Oh what lovely flies! I wish I could make flies as well as you do, Arthur,’ with admirable acting.

Her brother looked at her keenly as she stood by the table turning over the leaves of his fishing-book. Did she know of those dead rose-leaves which Miss Aurora had proposed should be gathered for her pot-pourri, and was she coming as a spy? No, it was nothing; a mere coincidence—that Cinderella of circumstance bound to carry all the burdens and accountable for all the ashes; or Miss Aurora had made the excuse designedly, wishing to give the child a little pleasure. It was nothing; and he was glad that she should go.

‘Has the mother given her permission?’ he asked with dutiful caution.

‘Yes,’ Hilda replied, still intent on the brown heckles and yellow dubs.

‘Very well,’ he returned kindly. ‘Be ready in half an hour, little one, and I will take you.’

Whereupon Hilda smiled, nodded, called him a dear boy, and then vanished; flying up the stairs like a young goat, and spending the greater part of the half-hour intervening in arranging her hat so as to show to the best advantage the little fringe on her forehead, quite satisfied with life as it stood, and believing in the beneficence of fortune as devoutly as ten years ago she used to believe in the generosity and foreknowledge of Santa Claus.

Meanwhile Lady Machell drove off to Owlett for the interview which had for its object Mrs. Smith’s absolute refusal to consent to this mad and wicked engagement between her daughter and Arthur.

‘And if she has any sense of her duty as a mother, and any kind of personal pride, she will refuse her consent after I have said all that I mean to say,’ thought my lady to herself, settling herself firmly in her seat and touching up the old cob smartly.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA

AUGUST 1877.

The World Well Lost.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

CHAPTER XXII.

WE ARE AGREED.

LADY MACHELL had always respected Mrs. Smith. Though the curiosity, which it was but natural she should feel as a woman, had been baffled by the reticence which it was just as natural she should resent as a denial of the rights due to rank and assured position by a commoner of unknown antecedents, still the refusal to tell the world more than she wished it to know, which was one of Mrs. Smith's characteristics, claimed my lady's respect, and won it. It was what she herself would have done in the same circumstances, and what, to her mind, every woman who respected herself should do. Consequently she approved theoretically even while personally annoyed; and she had justice enough to say so.

But to-day her esteem rose to admiration, and she was prepared to admit to all—even to Arthur—her appreciation of the exceeding excellence of Mrs. Smith of Owlett; her wonderful good sense and supreme judgment; as well as, in spite of their knowing so little about him, the nice feeling and high principle of her husband. It was a rosary of laudation from end to end; and in her gratitude for their co-operation she forgot to be jealous of an assumed equality which under other conditions would have offended her beyond forgiveness, and overlooked the fact that these commoners of unknown antecedents had placed themselves throughout on the same plane with herself, and had taken a tone of repudiation as proud as her own.

'I have come to claim your help, Mrs. Smith,' said Lady Machell, as the self-possessed mistress of Owlett entered the half-darkened drawing-room, receiving her, as she received all her guests, with that mixture of dignity and reserve which seemed to

recognise no grace in the present, and to deny the possibility of favour for the future.

‘If I can be of use,’ she answered, her calm eyes looking into my lady’s steadily.

‘You are the only person who can,’ said my lady.

‘Yes,’ replied Mrs. Smith tranquilly—her favourite monosyllable expressing neither acquiescence nor curiosity; a mere monosyllable—cast in as a break to silence, no more.

‘My son Arthur has engaged himself to your daughter Muriel,’ said Lady Machell, one of those direct women who like to cut their Gordian knots without the trouble of trying to unpick them—to go straight to their point without making excursions by the way, or losing time in beating about their central bush; ‘and you and I must prevent the marriage.’

Mrs. Smith’s delicate nostrils quivered, but she did not speak. She only bent her head—it might be in token of acquiescence; it might be as a sign that she had heard what my lady had said.

‘My son must marry money,’ continued my lady. ‘The Machell property has gone down, owing to the undeserved misfortunes of our house; and I scarcely think that your daughter has enough for my son’s needs. If she has such a dowry as will enable them to live according to his rank in the county, I withdraw my opposition. I want you to understand, dear Mrs. Smith, that it is not to Muriel herself, but to her financial position that I object—for herself, dear girl, she is simply charming.’

‘My daughter has nothing,’ said Mrs. Smith curtly.

‘Yet she has engaged herself to a man with nothing!’ cried my lady rather angrily. ‘Such an act of madness on either side! I gave Muriel credit for better sense than this!’

‘Young people have seldom much worldly wisdom in their love-affairs,’ was the reply made with the faintest flavour of sarcasm in the calm voice.

‘On which account it is the duty of those placed over them by Providence to direct them aright and keep them from folly,’ said my lady.

Again Mrs. Smith bent her head without verbal answer. Always chary of her words, my lady found her to-day more than ever taciturn.

‘Surely you could not have consented to this thoughtless engagement!’ cried Lady Machell, a little provoked by a silence which might be dignified but which was also embarrassing.

‘I have not consented to it,’ said Mrs. Smith.

My lady breathed more freely.

‘Thank God for that!’ she said with naïve fervour. ‘Indeed,

you may thank God for your side,' she added, remembering her breeding; 'for such a marriage would be as bad for Muriel as for Arthur.'

It cost the proud heart something to say this. Arthur without a penny would still have been to her mind a great match for Muriel with thousands; just as Wilfrid, inheriting bankruptcy, was a great match for his poor little straw-coloured Jemima, in spite of those ennobling and redeeming millions, whereby, according to the faith of to-day, the Brown vulgarity was softened into eccentricity and their mediocrity exalted into excellence.

'My daughter, like your son, must also marry money,' said Mrs. Smith coldly.

'Just so,' said my lady, with a rapid thought of Guy Perceval and the Manor; 'therefore she must not marry Arthur.'

'I do not wish her to do so, Lady Machell. She has neither asked my consent nor consulted me in her action.'

'And when she does you will refuse that consent?' said my lady, with a peremptory kind of eagerness which seemed to take a denial as impossible.

A slight look of pain crossed Mrs. Smith's pale face. 'I have already,' she answered, her voice unnaturally low and monotonous, and it was never other than low and level.

'To whom, if not to your daughter? To my son?'

'To your son.'

'He asked your sanction to this absurd scheme—this insane proposal—yours, when he had not dared to speak to me, his mother, of an attachment so impossible as to be almost criminal? He is mad!' said Lady Machell.

'He asked my sanction,' returned Mrs. Smith, wiping her upper lip which slightly quivered.

'And you refused of course?'

'Yes, because it is absurd, insane, impossible, almost criminal, that your son should marry my daughter, I did refuse,' she answered with a bitter smile.

'Yet he persists in it. He told his brother yesterday that he and Muriel meant to stand firm against all opposition, and that no remonstrance would move him.'

'He has said nothing more to me. Indeed, I have not seen him since. My daughter has not spoken to me. I am in entire ignorance as to the whole affair,' were Mrs. Smith's utterances made with forced calmness.

'In that case Muriel has acted with extreme indiscretion; for they have often met—they must have met,' cried Lady Machell.

'I am surprised that a girl of principle and good conduct should have so far forgotten herself.'

'I go out, as you know, rarely; and since my husband's return I have been chiefly occupied with him. Muriel has not wished to deceive me. She has had no opportunity for an explanation,' said Muriel's mother, somewhat evasively.

'She ought to have made an opportunity,' was my lady's reply made severely. 'You did not know that this absurd affair was going on—you, with an only daughter?'

'I had no means of knowing,' said Mrs. Smith haughtily.

'Let me then enlighten you on what all the world but yourself knows. Arthur and Muriel are openly and confessedly engaged, and the whole place is ringing with the news. It is an engagement made by my son in direct indifference to my wishes—in direct defiance of my prohibition.'

'Your son disregard your wish?' said Mrs. Smith, raising her eyebrows.

'I grieve to have it to confess, but it is the first time; and I can scarcely hold him alone responsible,' Lady Machell answered, aiming her shaft with more courage than courtesy. 'And so long as your daughter holds him to his promise he will naturally maintain it. As an honourable gentleman he could scarcely do less. And it is for this reason that I ask for your interference, Mrs. Smith—your prevention by your daughter of what else will be a crime.'

'I will do my best,' said Mrs. Smith. 'If Muriel will be guided by me, the affair will be at an end.'

'If!' said Lady Machell a little scornfully. 'A mother knows no "if" in her dealings with her daughter.'

'Muriel has been dutiful and obedient hitherto; but daughters, like sons, are apt to be unmanageable when parents oppose their wishes—in love,' Mrs. Smith replied.

'Muriel cannot be refractory—she must not! The future must be as the past,' said Lady Machell emphatically.

Mrs. Smith turned her troubled eyes to the floor. Somehow the experience of that past, smooth as it had been, did not wholly reassure her as to the conduct of the future. The very power of love which had hitherto made Muriel so easily dealt with, might it not make her just the reverse when the conditions were changed—when her affections which had been bound up in her obedience were now consecrated to resistance? Glad as she would have been to have satisfied my lady, and to have boldly promised all that she desired, she dared not take on herself this *sponsorship* too rashly. Muriel, though gentle, sweet, and good—

none more so—was not weak ; and if she had the pliancy of love she had also its tenacity.

‘You and Mr. Smith must both forbid it,’ repeated Lady Machell, watching her narrowly. ‘From what even I know of Muriel, you will have no difficulty in making her yield to your command, because you will have none in making her see her duty.’

‘We have no other wish,’ said Mrs. Smith in a curiously constrained manner.

‘Then I hold the thing for done,’ said Lady Machell.

‘It is as well not to be too confident,’ was the cautious answer, with that same subtle accent of constraint in the smooth voice, of trouble in the quiet eyes.

‘I may be safely confident if you are firm,’ said Lady Machell slowly. ‘If you and Mr. Smith are sincerely desirous of preventing this marriage, it will be prevented. You cannot shake me from this position.’

‘We are as sincerely desirous as yourself, Lady Machell,’ said the mistress of Owlett proudly.

My lady bowed. For the moment the two had changed places. It was Mrs. Smith who talked, and my lady who kept silent.

‘Would you like to see my husband on this matter?’ then said Mrs. Smith with more show of what in anyone else would have been called temper than Lady Machell had ever seen in her before. The want of fervent belief in her assertion seemed to try her patience strangely. ‘Perhaps he will convince you more thoroughly than it is evident I have been able to do that we are as much in earnest as yourself, and that we too wish to detach our daughter from your son, for our own reasons and for her own ultimate good.’

‘I shall have pleasure in seeing Mr. Smith,’ said my lady grandly ; the natural contradiction of human nature half disposing her to resent this pointed repudiation, this proud acquiescence—nay, more than acquiescence—as a personal offence that would have to be punished ; for was not Arthur so far beyond Muriel’s natural deserving that her mother might have been held excused—among mothers—had she even manœuvred to catch him, not to speak of holding him when caught ? Yet here she was, denying him as if he were a nobody, and professing her anxiety to prevent the marriage for reasons of her own and for her daughter’s ultimate good ! Lady Machell could have found it in her heart to be intensely angry, violently aggrieved ; but this was not the time for pride. If she could but accomplish her object, she would bear a few pin-pricks in the process. Let her but rescue Arthur from Muriel Smith, and she would submit to a little constructive humiliation

from the mother. Her relief was too real to allow her to feel personally wounded by a pride that so far was on her side, wherefore she resolutely turned from that view of matters to the æsthetic contemplation of Mrs. Smith's honourable and marvellously sensible conduct, which more than anything else that she had done or refrained from doing for all these fifteen years proved her to be a loyal and noble-natured woman, one whose life was an example to her generation and her principles without a flaw.

'I will bring him to you,' said Mrs. Smith; and with the conventional 'Pardon,' as she passed Lady Machell, she glided quickly from the room.

She did not ring and send a message by the servant, as anyone else would have done; but herself went for her husband, with a fine air of respect and wifely devotion not lost on Lady Machell, if not entirely approved—my lady holding to the doctrine of the supremacy of women and the inferior quality of men, who were sent by a benevolent Providence into the world chiefly that they might obey their mothers, provide for their wives, protect their sisters, and renounce all forms of life and liberty save those which women in general can themselves enjoy. It is the doctrine belonging to those of the thin-lipped tribe who have strong wills and more love of power than love of love.

In a short time Mrs. Smith returned, and with her the mystery of her life—this unknown owner of herself and Owlett, so long absent and so persistently invisible as to have become almost apocryphal.

Lady Machell looked at him with critical curiosity, seeking to understand the secret of his seclusion since his return. But she saw nothing to explain it. He was not marked with any kind of brand humiliating to show and painful to see; he was not ugly, not deformed, not imbecile, not touched with the faintest trace of loathsomeness or disease; he was a man in no wise to be ashamed of, but rather on the whole well-looking, if sad and weary—and yet—yes, certainly a little strange. Apparently he was about sixty years of age, though in reality he was not yet fifty; with short grizzly hair and a short grizzly beard; his eyes were well shaped, but uncomfortable in expression—restless, furtive, glancing—still they were handsome, if nothing more; his manner was quiet but evidently constrained; and he had the ordinary bearing of a gentleman, but with a curious air of disuse which might be accounted for by long absence from the country, and which he evidently tried to conceal.

Lady Machell greeted him with stately interest, and he returned her greeting with somewhat over-deference, though his

sombre melancholy of itself gave him a certain air of dignity—and always with eyes that glanced sideways, and never looked straight into any face save his wife's, which was his book of signals wherein he read his directions, his warnings, his encouragements.

'Lady Machell has come to claim your influence with our daughter,' began Mrs. Smith in the tone of one repeating a lesson. 'It seems that she and Mr. Machell have entered into an unwise little affair together, which it is the interest of both should be ended.'

'So?' said Mr. Smith, also as if rehearsing a part. 'What is there in the affair that it should not go on? You see I am ignorant of your local politics,' with a look to Lady Machell and something on his face that seemed as if it struggled to resemble a smile.

'The want of money on either side,' said Lady Machell hastily. 'My son has only his profession, and your daughter has nothing. It is impossible that they should marry under such conditions; but my son will not be the first to draw back—naturally; as a man of honour he scarcely could—and it must be for your daughter, influenced by you, to bring this folly to an end.'

'It is a folly which must come to an end,' repeated Mr. Smith, looking at his wife.

'Yes,' she said, meeting his eyes; 'it shall.'

'Then you do at last promise me that?' cried Lady Machell eagerly.

'So far as we have any influence over Muriel you may count on us,' was Mrs. Smith's reply; and Mr. Smith added as chorus, 'Certainly.'

'Thank you,' said Lady Machell. 'I was sure that I was dealing with honourable people. I was sure that you,' turning to Mrs. Smith with her gracious regality of manner, 'would not wish your daughter to enter a family against the desires of that family and the express denial of the parents.'

'By no means,' said Mrs. Smith, her pale face a trifle flushed; 'we are the last in the world, my husband and I, to encourage an unwelcome affair, even though Muriel's happiness should be at stake. We too have our pride.'

'You are right,' said Lady Machell; 'nothing can be more humiliating than a marriage made between young people where the parents are opposed. For though,' she added hastily, 'I need hardly say again that I have no cause of opposition to this alliance with your family save the mere want of money, yet, whatever the cause may be, if the fact exists the humiliation is the same.'

‘Just so,’ said Mrs. Smith, slightly curling her lip; ‘and this humiliation we are not disposed to undergo.’

How small and puerile, how mean and ungenerous, my lady’s objections seemed to her, with that terrible reserve in the background! If there had been nothing but this want of money between the young people and their happiness, she would have been the first to have urged them to remain constant; to have counselled him to work and her to endure. But the truth of things was far removed from this mere outside circumstance, this mere husk of life; and though forced to play my lady’s game with all the skill of which she was capable, she played it from such a different standpoint, for stakes so infinitely more serious, that she could afford to despise her partner’s as both fallacious and contemptible.

After this other things were talked of; Lady Machell, radiant in the consciousness of having fulfilled her mission and rescued her beloved, lending herself to every subject on which they touched with the grace and cleverness that belonged to her when she was in a good humour, which was not always; and especially forbearing to question Mr. Smith on his travels and adventures during all these years, as if knowing, by her fine intuitive perception of things, that he would rather not take the world into his confidence—perhaps vaguely suspecting that he was on the whole wise in proportion to his reticence.

‘Where is Muriel?’ she then asked kindly. She would be very sweet and tender to the girl in Arthur’s absence and when this foolish little affair was at an end. She could afford to be gracious then, not having another son to be drawn into danger, and Guy Perceval to all appearance free from peril. She would make it up to her in every way possible, and perhaps get her well married to some county man independent of a jointure, but one whom she did not covet for Hilda. ‘She has always been a great favourite of mine, and when Arthur has left us I hope that I shall see much of her. It must make no difference in our relations.’

‘Derwent and she are at Tower this afternoon,’ answered Mrs. Smith quietly, taking no notice of my lady’s gracious announcement.

Lady Machell changed colour.

‘I am going to Tower now,’ she said, rising hastily and in disorder; ‘perhaps I shall see them.’

‘You are sure to do so,’ said Mrs. Smith, also rising and looking at her steadily; while Edmund turned away his head and fingered the books on the table nervously.

His eyes were full of tears, and he dared not let his face be

seen. That sweet child of his, who loved him with so much devotion and whom he loved so tenderly, to be doomed to such a trial as that which was before her, and all because of him! Had there been nothing against this marriage but the mere want of money which had been Lady Machell's overwhelming obstacle and impelling motive, he, like his wife, would have held by their daughter's happiness in preference to Arthur Machell's advantage, which moreover they would have argued was secured in the highest sense by this marriage. They would, as they had already done with each other, have placed love and fidelity before worldly wisdom and social gain. But with that other something which must one day be discovered, they had no choice; and that other something which was to strike her to the heart, that would come from him, and him only. A second *Virginius*, it was his hand that must slay the beloved; but it was not a stranger's iniquity from which he had to shield her, it was his own crime for which she must suffer. The past had already borne bitter fruits, but none so bitter as this. And yet, was this the worst that had to come?

'She is a very charming girl,' then said Lady Machell, looking at Mrs. Smith; 'I love her dearly, and will be her best friend in the county. It is only this dreadful want of fortune.'

'We understand you, Lady Machell,' said Mrs. Smith with a sudden flash of angry pride. 'Pray say no more. Are we not agreed?'

'She has no right to it, but her pride is my friend,' thought Lady Machell, smiling softly to herself as she pressed Mrs. Smith's hand with deprecating warmth; 'and being my friend, I forgive it; else——'

It was not difficult to know what that shadowy alternative implied; but, as things were, the rivalry in stately self-respect, which my lady would have regarded as an infringement on her own rights, fitted in too well to be punished, and the two women parted to all appearance in perfect harmony of feeling—which was certainly only appearance with the one, if my lady was for the moment absolutely sincere.

Still there was that dangerous little conclave all this time hatching mischief and harbouring evil at Tower; and Lady Machell felt that she could not scatter it to the winds an instant too soon or by any method whatsoever too severe. Wherefore, whipping up her cob even more smartly than before, she went at a rattling pace over the ground between Owlett and Tower, and in far less time than it generally took passed the sunk fence which separated the high road from the lawn. And there on the lawn, in the full view of anyone who might have passed that way—in

the full light of day, as if such things were of ordinary occurrence among decent English gentry, with the religion of appearances to obey as well as with well-mannered souls to be saved in the orthodox way—she saw what for a moment blinded her with a curious sense of insecurity and the general madness of all humanity—Derwent Smith, pale, agitated, bareheaded, holding Hilda in his arms—she also pale, agitated, bareheaded, and with her dress falling in tattered lengths about her, leaning against his breast, holding up her face to his as if asking to be kissed and expecting to be answered.

Arthur, with Muriel's hand in his, was close to them, apparently sympathising and comforting, in no wise reproving nor even restraining. Muriel, her disengaged hand on Derwent's shoulder, was bending near to Hilda, and as Lady Machell passed stooped down to kiss the back of her tangled curly head; and Miss Aurora, the elderly Venus hovering round this modern Cupid and Psyche, was laughing and crying by turns, and making various movements with her arms that gave her the appearance of a huge old bird fluttering round her nestlings, pruning their wings for flight.

'Good heavens, Arthur! what is the meaning of all this?' cried Lady Machell, sweeping into the group like an angry Juno. 'Have you lost your senses for Hilda as well as for yourself—are you really mad?'

'Derwent has just saved the child's life,' said Arthur quietly. 'You owe it to him, mother, that you have a daughter at this moment at all.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

CUPID AND PSYCHE.

MEANWHILE this was what had happened:—

The four young people had assembled at Tower, paired and presided over by Miss Aurora as the general sympathiser with young love, whether parents refused and common sense forbade, or whether, on the contrary, fortune smiled and mothers had schemed. It was all one to her what the finger-posts said. It was love; and to her idea love was the prettiest plaything afloat, and to be encouraged like any other pet—her jackdaw, for instance, or that little black monkey with the ruffed face; the one a stealer of valuable property which could never be replaced, the other a destroyer of brittle ware which could never be repaired.

Acting then on this general sympathy, she arranged her guests according to their desires, on the principle of doing as she would

be done by were she in their places. Arthur and Muriel were dismissed with a shrill laugh and a waggish dancing of the feathery ringlets, and bid to pick rose-leaves in the long terrace walk where they were tolerably screened from view and not likely to be interrupted; while she herself took possession of Derwent and Hilda, and fanned with her breezy airs of juvenile participation the tender little flame of their childish romance. And as they were still in that embryonic state of feeling when it is pleasure enough to be together, with liberty to speak but without desire to express, it was no hindrance to their happiness that Miss Aurora held Hilda's hand on the one side, while Derwent walked in blissful admiration on the other; or that the conversation was mainly composed of silly little speeches from their chaperon, to which Derwent made sententious replies and Hilda cast in a few random and not very sensible interjections. On the contrary, her presence was a kind of sanction which gave them courage and broke up the embarrassment that else might have sprung from too safe a solitude; and Derwent insinuated, and Hilda looked, things of infinitely more force and meaning than either would have dared had they been alone. In this way then, they strolled about the garden, always at a discreet distance from the terrace 'where,' Miss Aurora said, 'those dear things were picking rose-leaves, and where she, for one, did not want to pick gooseberries;' till she began to think what more she could do for her special charges, and how much mischief under the guise of kindness she could work them.

'Come and see the view, you dears,' she then said, turning her head from one to the other. 'I have made such a sweet little nest up there—just what will suit you both, you dear little things. You will look like two dear, darling little doves on a perch.'

Hilda laughed prettily, looked sweet, and thought to herself: 'What a dreadful old goose she is!' and Derwent contrasted her airs of false juvenility and undignified gush with his own mother and Lady Machell, not to the advantage of this breezy old Baby who was giving herself so much trouble to please them both. But as we do not wear glass windows in our breasts, it did not much signify what they felt; and as both expressed their willingness to follow Miss Aurora wherever she chose to lead, and as both looked pleased and handsome and conscious, she was more than ever satisfied with the part which she had assumed, and saw herself in still clearer lines as a generous kind of Venus protecting Cupid and Psyche instead of persecuting them—the patron saint of youth and love.

This view, which she was making now the occasion of injudi-

cious aid to an impossible affair, and which was the great feature of the place, was from the top of the old tower which gave its name to the house. There had originally been a stronghold of some kind here, but all traces had long ago disappeared save this one ruin covered with ivy and haunted by owls. It was on the top of this, to which a narrow flight of wooden steps had been made, that Miss Aurora had built her nest, as she called it—that is, had had a garden seat put under the shadow of the western wall. All the dangerous parts were railed round, and the whole thing made apparently safe; so that it was in no sense an expedition to go there, though practically few of the Tower guests ever did. The ladies did not like the stairs, and the men, having seen the country once, did not care to study it again. Yet it was a splendid view, stretching far down the valley and over the low hills out to the broad plain and the shining sea beyond. They could see the stately pile of Machells, with its long slope of park and background of noble woods; the leafy corner where Owlett was hidden under the shadow of the fell; the little village in the hollow, with the church and parsonage set on an eminence dominating the lower lives at their feet; distant towns; and, about four miles off, that glaring, treeless, and obtrusive Paumelle House, which looked as if it had grown up in a night and had not had time yet to get mellowed into harmony with the rest.

The day was soft and tender; a suggestive day, made for poets and young lovers. It was a day to inspire and excite; and Derwent, who was young, vain, impressionable, and in love, began to quote poetry as the best expression that he could give to the feelings and thoughts possessing him. It was an accomplishment in which he excelled; and the manner in which he repeated some of 'Childe Harold' touched Hilda so that she left her seat and went over to the side of the ruin, leaning against the wooden railing which protected the gap and was the sole barrier between her and a sheer descent of some sixty feet. There she stood, her pretty little face half shaded, half revealed by her Rubens hat; her eyes fixed now on the sky and now on Derwent as he went through his stanzas; and her slight, sylph-like figure, leaning against the wooden railing, standing in all its slender grace delicately outlined against the sky. On the garden-seat sat Derwent in the pose and with the sentiment of a troubadour or an improvisatore; and Miss Aurora, dancing her curls, expressed her admiration by a series of signs in dumb show, which if reduced to a system would have been invaluable in a deaf-and-dumb asylum. Great brown bees rifled the flowers with which the old ruin was overgrown; butterflies spread out their wings on the broad green leaves of the ivy;

dragon-flies darted hither and thither like strips of rainbow flashing from earth to sky; birds twittered in the trees close by; cattle lowed in the distance, and the village dogs barked in warning or in welcome: all nature was at rest, or happy in its labour, and sorrow and turmoil and distress seemed as far off as Arctic snows or tropical storms.

Down below, on the terraced walk, Arthur and Muriel made believe to remember their ostensible mission of replenishing Miss Aurora's pot-pourri. But they had graver work on hand than that of massing rose-leaves in a fancy basket, for Arthur knew that the decisive moment of their lives was upon them, and that all would depend on Muriel's tenacity of love on the one hand and power of resistance on the other. Who would win the day—her mother, influenced by Lady Machell; also, as Arthur had so often remembered, in some mysterious way herself averse from this alliance—or would he be the conqueror to the end as he had been so far successful in the beginning?

'They will try to take you from me, Muriel,' he said, after he had told her of Lady Machell's opposition and errand to Owlett. 'Will they succeed?'

'No,' she answered quickly. 'No one could take me from you now, Arthur.'

'Whatever their arguments might be?'

'I think not,' she said with a faint smile, as if the supposition were too extravagant to hold water.

'They will try all they know, dear. They will try to touch your pride by telling you that you will be unwelcome in the family, and that if you enter it, it will be against their wishes and unrecognised by them; and they will try to move you by your very love—by telling you that your marriage with me will be my ruin as well as your own. But if you can withstand them all, throw their arguments to the winds, and trust to me only, we shall wear through every obstacle and come out victorious in the end. It is a trial for you, my darling, and one which will touch you in your best feelings; for I know you, and I know what they will do. But I may rely on your trust in me; may I not?'

His young, flushed, handsome face looked into hers eagerly, searchingly. His bright blue eyes were dark, and something was in them which, had he not been a man, would have been tears.

Muriel laid her hand on his arm.

'You may rely on me,' she said with the tone and look of one taking an oath—quiet, solemn, intense, and religious; free from passion and affectation alike. 'I have given you my promise and my love, and I can take back one as little as the other.'

'I trust you implicitly for yourself,' he answered fervently, but with a certain ring of trouble still in his voice. 'The only thing that makes me anxious is, if my mother can convince you that you will do me harm by marrying me. I know that this will be her great argument after her appeal to your pride has failed.'

'I will say to her, if she does tell me that I shall do you harm, that I cannot judge of your affairs for you,' said Muriel. 'I suppose you do know your own affairs best, Arthur?' she added, looking up into his face playfully; 'and that you are not in need of a care-taker and adviser?'

'(Of both in you,' he answered, catching her tone for an instant, but passing off again into the more earnest and anxious mood in which he had been for the whole interview. 'But tell me, Muriel, he continued, 'how will you meet your mother's refusal, if mine has influenced her so far as to induce her to forbid our engagement? If she says that you are not to see me, what will you do?'

'I must obey her so far,' said Muriel, her eyes filling with tears and her soft mouth quivering. 'I could not vex papa and mamma by direct disobedience. If they forbid me to see you, however hard it will be, I must give it up while I am in their house; but,' turning to him with a kind of quiet, concentrated devotion, more impressive than the most fervid demonstrations, 'I will be true to you under all trials and in every circumstance. You need not fear me, Arthur. I could not be false to you for anyone—not even for papa or mamma or Derwent. No one could make me desert you.'

'You have satisfied me now, truly and wholly,' he said in a low voice, kissing her sweet face with as much tenderness as passion, as much respect as love.

'Have I?' she smiled; 'did you doubt me?'

'Not you; I do not doubt you, darling; but I do fear the weight of my mother's arguments.'

'They will not outweigh my promises, my love, my trust!' cried Muriel with a certain passion in her voice, of all things the most unusual with her, as she lifted her eyes full into Arthur's, and taking one of his hands in both her own kissed it with a kind of Ruth-like devotion that had as much religion in it as love.

'Muriel,' he began to remonstrate; but a truer sense than the ordinary gallantry of the English gentleman, true as that is, overcame his first impulse, and he left his hand in hers, pressed warmly, tenderly against her breast.

'I love you, do I not?' she continued; 'and I have promised to be true to you under all trials? I could not fail you! Darling! oh, believe me, I could not!'

With a sudden, overpowering impulse of emotion she flung herself into his arms; then, partly for shame and partly for love, she burst into tears all the same as if she had been unhappy for loss, instead of being, as she was, too blessed for peace.

'I do believe you, Muriel. God bless you. I dare not speak,' said Arthur, in the constrained voice of a man too deeply moved to trust himself; but he held her to his heart and smoothed the hair from her forehead, and by degrees Muriel checked her tears, and looking up into his face with a girlish glance of penitence, blushed as she said half softly: 'How silly I have been!' Arthur answering: 'How dear and lovely, you mean. My darling! my beloved! I cannot love you nor thank you enough.'

Suddenly, while they were standing there in the shadow of the laurels hedging in the walk, feeling in that moment what gods have felt in power and saints in ecstasy—the divine glory of life and the supreme blessedness of love—they heard one shrill shriek of concentrated terror, and then rapid screams of a wilder and more distracted kind. The shriek was Hilda's, the screams were Miss Aurora's, as the railing against which the girl was leaning gave way, and she was flung into space—that sheer descent of sixty feet below; but caught in the branches of a young ash-tree that grew out from the wall some twenty feet from the top.

'Hilda!' was all that Arthur said, as he and Muriel turned to the ruin to see a mass of light drapery fluttering among the branches and leaves of the ivy, to hear the clattering of the falling stones and the crashing of the small twigs, and to realise the certain death lying below.

In another moment he had rushed up the steps and disappeared, while Muriel, dazed with dread, saw Derwent leap from the top of the tower to—she knew not where; for involuntarily she covered her eyes and cowered close to the ground. It was too horrible to see him fling himself thus, perhaps to his death, for her to look at it as at a fine gymnastic feat; but when she turned again, her momentary faintness and instinctive shrinking past, she saw him standing on a projecting buttress close to Hilda's side, holding on by the ash-tree with one hand, while with the other he supported her. He had measured his distance and dropped on to a through stone a few feet from the top; then swung himself down by the ivy to the platform made by the broken head of a buttress close to where Hilda's ash had caught the poor child in the fall, and saved her from destruction. It was a bold drop. Had he missed his footing, nothing could have saved him; but he had the nerve of faith and the courage of love, and so alighted safely and kept his footing firmly.

At first she nearly ruined all by the frantic way in which she clung to him. Her small hands clutched him with such desperate strength as almost dragged him from his foothold; but he caught at a branch of the ash-tree in time, which kept him up; and after a while he calmed her so far that she no longer did her best to dash them both to pieces in her fear of falling.

Help too was at hand before Derwent's nerve or strength had failed, if indeed the former would; the latter might, without reproach to his courage or his power, as he had struck his arm against a jagged stone which had cut through the sleeve and made an ugly gash, and pain tells in the long-run. In this case, however, the run was not long and there was no time for failing; as the help of strong hands and cool heads came, and the worse results of what was already bad enough were prevented.

The first intimation of rescue was given by Miss Aurora ceasing to scream, and hanging over the side of the ruin as she called out: 'Don't give way, darlings! We are coming down to you directly! It will be all right, my loves!'

Then she diverted her energies to Muriel, beseeching her not to faint or scream—which she had not the slightest intention of doing—as the dear little things were quite safe and would soon be all right; for Bob Rushton, who had been playing at work near the place and had seen the whole affair, with a curious reminiscence of requirements in certain circumstances of his past history, had brought a coil of rope which he and Arthur were preparing to use. Bob was especially demonstrative and eloquent in his exhortations for the young gentleman to hold on and the young lady not to be afraid; and Arthur proved something of the quality of his nature by the coolness, promptitude, and self-command with which he foresaw what was necessary and arranged what had to be done, though he felt his little sister's peril as if it had been his own death. But he was not a man to cherish his feelings to the loss of his power; so, making the slip-knot secure, he flung the end of the rope below as coolly as if he had been doing a bit of common stone-mason's work—hauling up a block of granite instead of perhaps saving, perhaps losing, two lives, the one of which was infinitely dear to him, the other part of the life of the woman whom he loved. Derwent also cool, as a brave man's very love makes him, fastened the rope securely round the poor little girl's waist, taking occasion for a great many loving words and more than one boyish caress, which it must be confessed Hilda rather liked than not, and returned with not too much grudging, though she knew that it was naughty and would have to be repented of; and *then*, with a great deal of masculine encouragement on all hands,

she was slowly drawn back to safety and the solid earth once more. Derwent accompanied her so far as he could, guiding her with wonderful courage and care as he swung himself from branch to branch of the overhanging ivy, till the supports growing weak, and the stones crumbling beneath his hands and feet, he was obliged to stop and consent to be hauled up the remaining distance somewhat ignominiously for a hero, when her safe landing had been accomplished.

This done, what might have been the most direful tragedy of local history ever enacted ended in a few bruises and a ragged skirt for Hilda, a rather ugly gash and a torn coat-sleeve for Derwent, and a general condition of agony and relief, pain and joy, with multitudinous kisses and congratulations, all round; Muriel crying softly to herself as she flung her arms round Derwent, feeling that he had never been so dear as now, and even Arthur moved more than he liked to own as he took Hilda to his heart and thanked God for her safety. The scene was wound up by a fit of hysterics from Miss Aurora, and a rapid calculation on the part of Bob Rushton how he could win capital out of his zeal and make his activity pay. He was not fond of work, and he found Miss Dinah's tender mercies, if not cruel—that would be too strong a term—undeniably heavy.

This then was how it came about that when Lady Machell drove up to Tower she came upon that little group on the lawn—Cupid and Psyche embracing each other with effusion, while the rest stood by as the sympathetic audience aiding the delinquents of their admiration. For Psyche had been incited to a fresh outburst of gratitude by the discovery of Cupid's ugly gash and torn coat-sleeve—got in his brave delivery of herself from danger—and she knew no better method of expression than that which had been so effectual before, and which, though naughty and to be repented of—she knew that—she was not sorry to repeat.

'I owe it to him that I have a daughter at this moment at all; and where then were you, her brother?' asked my lady in her most regal tones and with a heavy frown. She had not been warmed up to their point, and her surprised indignation was perhaps natural. All the same it struck the actors in the drama, excited as they were, as eminently hard, unwomanly, and unfeeling.

'I was in the garden; Hilda was on the tower,' answered Arthur coldly.

'And why were you not with her? You should not have left her. I shall never be able to trust her out of my sight with you again,' cried Lady Machell as if she had been speaking to a nurse,

with intentional discourtesy for the purpose of humiliating him before Muriel.

The colour changed on Arthur's face, but he did not answer. It was not pleasant to bear, but—she was his mother, and Muriel would understand.

'But in any circumstances I see no reason for such an extraordinary display as this,' my lady continued, looking round from Miss Aurora to Derwent, and from Derwent to Hilda, as severely to one as the other. 'I never thought'—to her daughter—'that I should have to reprove you, Hilda, for impropriety or want of reserve; yet I find you—I will not trust myself to give it words!'

'Oh, mother! if you had been hanging where I was, with that dreadful precipice below, and a dear, good, brave boy had saved your life at the risk of his own, and got hurt too, you would have done anything to show your gratitude—far more than I have done to Derwent!' cried Hilda, with a curious burst of mingled emotion and temper, as she turned to Muriel—not to Lady Machell—and sobbed hysterically on her neck. The tears that had been shed that morning at Tower were in goodly quantity.

'Don't cry, darling,' said Muriel softly, while Arthur took advantage of the child's position to make Muriel conscious of his presence; and poor Derwent, more distracted than when she had been in danger, almost forgot Lady Machell's august presence in his youthful anguish at the tears of his beloved.

'Do not do that, Hilda,' said Lady Machell a little less harshly, but not softened to the point yet of positive tenderness. 'I cannot bear to see you cry like this. I am not vexed with you, child. I can quite understand your state, but'—her heart always sore against that recreant son of hers, until of late so passionately beloved—'your brother should have had more thought for you; he should have taken more care of you.'

'Arthur could not prevent the rail from giving way,' sobbed Hilda, looking up with an indignant flash.

It was an unusual luxury to her to be able to tell her mind to her mother, or to oppose her in any way; and she thought the present opportunity for a little moral relaxation too good to be lost.

'Perhaps not,' said my lady coldly; 'but he might have prevented your leaning against it, if that was the way in which you fell into danger. However, as I know no particulars, perhaps some one will kindly enlighten me,' looking to Miss Aurora.

'It all happened very simply, Lady Machell,' answered Baby, taking up the challenge. 'I will tell you in a very few words. *Those dear things*,' indicating Arthur and Muriel, 'were picking

rose-leaves for my pot-pourri, and I took up those dear little loves to see the view from the top of the tower. Mr. Derwent was repeating poetry, and that dear little Hilda went to the side and leant against a rail; and then the rail broke and she fell down, and Mr. Derwent jumped after her; and the tower is sixty feet from the ground.'

'I suppose they did not fall that sixty feet,' said my lady, unable to prevent her sarcasm, though she had turned white and was trembling.

'No. I was caught in a tree, and Derwent jumped down after me. But it was a miracle that he was saved,' said Hilda. 'We can never thank him too much, mother.'

'So I think,' said Arthur warmly.

'Thank you, my dear,' said Lady Machell, holding out her hand to Derwent and speaking with a quite natural emotion. 'I am deeply grateful to you. I see that you are hurt. I hope not seriously?'

'It is nothing. It was for Hilda—' 'Hilda!' half murmured my lady uneasily—'and for her I would have died, willingly,' said Derwent with more simplicity and less affectation than was his wont.

It seemed as if the peril in which both had been so lately had sobered and, as it were, strengthened and ennobled him; as a great danger does when the nature has sufficient depth and the vanity and folly encrusting it are only superficial.

'You are very good,' said Lady Machell a little proudly; 'but is not your devotion rather excessive? I like courage, but I do not sympathise with heroics.'

'Mother! how can you speak so to poor dear Derwent when he has done what he has?' cried Hilda, half wondering at her own boldness; while Arthur turned away, softly whistling a bar of the 'Blue Danube' to himself.

Now, it was undeniable that at the present moment my lady was as she said deeply grateful to the preserver of her daughter, and that she had to check her natural impulse which of itself, without ulterior danger connected therewith, would have led her to take the lad to her heart with as much maternal effusion as if he had been her own son. But she was still Lady Machell, if also the mother of a rescued child; and neither joy in the rescue nor gratitude to the rescuer must blind her to things as they were or make her unmindful of her rights, her privileges, and other people's duties. Wherefore, when her daughter, emboldened by the success so far of that moral relaxation already indulged in, and too highly wrought to be careful of signs, permitted herself to make a remonstrance which my

lady would not have allowed from Sir Gilbert himself when she was young, and before he had lost the power of command, she felt that this kind of thing had gone on long enough; and turning to Hilda then and there strangled at its birth the first little demon of rebellion which had ever dared to make head against her.

'Silence, my dear,' she said in her most royal manner. 'Your having been preserved from danger does not warrant your indulgence in impertinence. You must remember who I am when you speak to me, and then I shall not have occasion to remind you.'

'Do not scold her on my account,' cried Derwent hurriedly, looking penetrated with distress; and: 'Come to me, Lil,' said Arthur, putting his arm round her waist and leading her a short distance apart.

'Your arm is bad, Derwent; let me bathe it for you,' said Muriel to cover the retreat. Also she was anxious for her brother.

'Yes, come into the house, you dear boy,' chirped Miss Aurora. 'It had better be bathed.'

'It is really not worth all the trouble you are taking for me,' said Derwent; but on Lady Machell saying graciously: 'You had better go, my dear, else you will suffer more pain than you need,' he agreed to let himself be ministered to, because it was Hilda's mother who advised.

'And you must come and have your dress mended, you dear little thing,' said Venus to Psyche. 'You are in an awful plight—all in rags and jags, like a darling little beggar that has just come into town,' laughing.

'I will soon mend your dress so that it will look respectable, Hilda,' said Muriel kindly. 'I am going in with Derwent.'

'No; I wish you to stay here with me, Miss Smith,' my lady interposed in her peremptory manner. 'Your brother can bathe his scratched arm without you, and Miss Aurora's maid can mend my daughter's dress. I have something of importance to say to you, and these things are not important.'

Muriel looked at Arthur. The terrible crisis through which she, like the others, had just passed, made her shrink from an interview where would be only pain and distress.

'Must you have your talk now, mother?' said Arthur. 'Muriel is shaken, as you can see; and it is her brother who has just saved our little one's life,' with emphasis and meaning.

'I must,' said Lady Machell, holding her head straight and speaking in her most decisive tones. 'Derwent's courage does not affect Muriel's want of fortune; and all that I have to say is comprised in that one word.'

'It is not the winning word, dear mother,' he returned gently.

'We shall see,' she answered.

'Go with my mother, Muriel,' then said Arthur, in a quiet, low, and steady voice, taking Muriel's hand, and in the very face of his mother carrying it to his lips. 'It is time that we all understood each other clearly.'

'It is,' said my lady, bringing her lips into that well-known thin line which meant so much.

'And remember all that I have just said to you,' he continued, in the same voice and manner as before. 'It is your trial.'

'Yes,' answered Muriel, a sad, faint smile coming like a ray of moonlight, rather than the traditional sunlight, over her face.

Her heart had sunk within her, and she was trembling visibly like a frightened doe; but her spirit was firm, if her body suffered; and she felt prepared to endure and resist any pain whatsoever that might be in the trial before her, as a martyr endures to the end for the sake of the truth to which he is pledged to testify and bound not to betray.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TIME OF TRIAL.

THE two stood in the lime-walk facing each other—Lady Machell in her long, straight, flowing black gown, with the soft Indian shawl drawn round her like Greek drapery, imperative, severe, majestic, not to be turned from her course by any appeal to her feelings that was not endorsed by her judgment, positive in view, inflexible in determination, a woman born to impose her will on the world around her, and to rule while others yielded; Muriel, in a pretty dress of pale brown, quiet in manner, soft of voice, sensitive in face, a tall, supple, tender girl, sweet and pure and loving, but with no instinct of command and no spirit of opposition, only tenacious to love and loyal to principle—surely a girl to be influenced without difficulty by a woman of my lady's Junonic quality!

The sweet scents of the lime-blossoms hung heavy on the drowsy air; windless clouds, soft and grey, veiled the glare and cooled the heat of the summer sky; and the whole sense of life was one of peace, as the whole aspect of nature was that of rest. But the two standing there were strangely at odds with this sentiment of peace, this expression of repose. Different and apparently unequal, they had met in what was substantially deadly combat—substituting the facts of life for blows—feelings, arguments, threats, and constancy for the weapons of the one, the armour of the other.

Lady Machell, usually so calm and self-possessed from pride on the one side and unchecked command on the other, was now shaken as by a storm. Her anger against Arthur and Muriel was met by her passionate love for him and the admiration which her natural justice could not refuse to give to her; her intense distaste to this threatened alliance eddied against the yearning gratitude which, as a mother, she felt for the saviour of her child—that saviour Muriel's brother—but the sense that this was an unhappy moment for her opposition and one that set her in an odious and unworthy light, instead of softening, made her grimmer and harder and more determined to carry her action to its ultimate development. At the same time it made her at war with herself, and increased the tumult within her. As for Muriel, she knew that her hour of pain had come, and that Arthur's mother standing there before her was her enemy whom she must resist to the last shred of her strength.

The hour, hard as it was for both, had to be lived through; and whether nature was soft like a sleeping child about them, or furious in storm and uprooting like the goddess of war let loose, the two women in the lime-walk had to fight out their fight to the end, and prove which would be the stronger—a mother's anger or a maiden's love.

The preliminaries were soon settled. Lady Machell asked Muriel in a formal manner—the salute before the swords were crossed—if it were true what she had heard, that she and her son Arthur had entered into what they chose to call an engagement together—the contemptuous phrase striking the key-note sharply; and Muriel, looking into her face steadily but without bravado had said: Yes, it was true; they were engaged.

‘Indeed! But I suppose you do not expect that I can sanction this folly?’ then said my lady with a smile of superiority; ‘nor can you yourself believe in its continuance.’

‘I do believe in its continuance,’ Muriel answered very gently as to voice and manner, but with more firmness than Lady Machell had anticipated. ‘It is for life and death; nothing can undo it.’

‘What every love-sick school-girl says, my dear. It is always for life and death, whether it is for the singing-master to-day or the unattainable prince to-morrow. You have more common sense than to give in to these heroics, Muriel, and are quite wise enough to see the impossibility of this affair.’

‘Indeed, Lady Machell, I do not,’ Muriel pleaded.

‘Let us understand one another,’ my lady went on to say, not noticing the interruption; ‘this rash affair—so rash as to be an absurdity—must be given up. You must renounce it now at once.’



LADY MACHELL AND MURIEL

'If he wishes it,' said Muriel.

'Whether he wishes it or not. It is impossible, and must not go on.'

Muriel did not answer. As it was not impossible, according to her way of thinking and Arthur's plans, she had nothing to say. Moreover she felt, sagely enough, that the less she did say to my lady the more chance there was of keeping the peace and the less of burning all the boats irrevocably.

'Without money on either side, with no prospect of a sufficient dowry at any time with you, and with my son's social requirements—his name and station which he has to keep up—it is too absurd. It would be a marriage into beggary and something worse—at least for Arthur,' she added cruelly. 'You must give up all hope, all idea of it now at once,' she repeated.

'Whenever he wishes it,' Muriel answered, as she had answered before.

'Let me say something which may help you in your decision ;—if you enter our family, you enter it against our consent. Not one of us will or can welcome you among us.'

Lady Machell said this with sudden and intense severity. Muriel's tenacity, which was more tenacious than she had expected, had rasped away the thin layer of courtesy with which her anger and disdain had been so far coated, and she meant to try now what plain speaking would do.

'I should be very sorry for that, Lady Machell,' said Muriel, lifting her eyes but giving no sign of yielding.

'More than sorry, I imagine,' returned my lady loftily. 'You would be deterred.'

'No, not deterred, unless he were,' said Muriel. 'It would be for him to decide, not me.'

'And you have so little sense of womanly dignity that you would marry into a family which refused to receive you?'

'It would be very, very hard, but one marries the one person and not all the family,' said Muriel ; 'and if I should be sufficient for him he would for me.'

'You would separate him from his own people, and not be ashamed of your selfishness? and this you call love!' cried Lady Machell with indignant energy.

Muriel's colour came into her face. She was not used to hard words, and they stung her.

'It is not I who would separate him from you; it is you who would discard him. It would be your own voluntary act; no one would oblige you to do it,' she answered.

'Which means that you are to have your own wilful way in

everything, and no one is to resent your wickedness or interfere with you,' cried Lady Machell hotly; to which Muriel returned, a little under her breath: 'If it were wickedness.'

'It is,' said my lady; 'intense wickedness; and what will never bring you a blessing. I, Arthur's mother, tell you so. I oppose the whole affair,' she continued, her voice deepening, her figure stiffening, her whole personality as it were strung and strengthened to the one endeavour to crush if she could not convince Muriel. 'I forbid this engagement—this shameful marriage. So does his father; so does his elder brother—the future head of our house, and his superior both in age and position. If you encourage him in continuing it, you encourage him in disobedience to those whom it is his first duty to honour and obey. As your own parents disapprove of this affair as much as we, you will be disobedient and undutiful on your side as well as making him so on his. The whole thing, from first to last, is a crime as well as a folly. How can you say your prayers to God, look up to heaven and ask for grace, when you induce my son to disobey me, and yourself disregard the commands of your parents?'

'I will obey papa and mamma if they refuse to sanction the engagement,' said Muriel—'that is,' she added, answering the triumph that flashed into Lady Machell's face, 'I will not make any occasions for meeting him, and he will not come to Owlett; but I will trust and wait. I have promised to be true to him, whatever happens, and I will keep my word.'

Lady Machell looked at her with a disdain so passionate, an anger so intense, that Muriel involuntarily shuddered. Dislike of even a mild kind was almost unknown to her—how indeed could anyone dislike her?—and this sudden expression of passionate repulsion seemed to overpower her as if she had been trampled on and bruised physically. Then my lady fired her eighty-one-ton gun, which she had kept in reserve for the final effort should her other shots have failed.

'You will make him keep his; you hold him to his promise, you mean,' she said. 'The word of a gentleman is sacred—you know that—and a Machell, even if not rich, is a match far beyond the daughter of a Mr. and Mrs. Smith whom no one knows and many doubt. It is a calculation worthy of a practised woman of the world, Miss Smith; were you ten or fifteen years older I should not have been taken by surprise, but I confess I scarcely expected such astuteness and such courage from a person of your age and limited experience.'

'Lady Machell, you are unjust, and you know that you are!' cried Muriel indignantly.

'I am not unjust; I am candid and observant,' said my lady. 'It is what everyone will say, and what we all have said among ourselves already. Of course you will keep your word, because you know that he will keep his, and you know that if you let him go you will never have such another chance again.'

Muriel turned away, and made a few steps along the walk. It was hard to bear such a taunt as this, striking as it did on the most sensitive fibres of her nature, and wounding her modesty as well as her love, her truth and pride as well as her fidelity. But she remembered what Arthur had said to her, and how he had forewarned her of her trials; and then she felt as if she were going through one of those temptations of old-time romance wherein the forms of angels were to be resisted as well as those of demons, and an appeal to her conscience to be laid aside together with one to her weakness.

'He knows that it is for himself alone,' she said, coming back after a short pause; 'he knows that it is neither his name nor station for which I love him; but because he is Arthur; and that were he a mere nobody, ruined, disgraced, or anything you like, he would always be to me what he is now. He could never accuse me of self-interest, for he knows that I am ready to sacrifice even his love for his greater good—if it were his greater good.'

'He is bound by his promise; he can do nothing; it is you who have to release him; and you would release him if your love were as true as you say it is,' said my lady eagerly.

'He has only to make me understand this,' said Muriel; 'it would be done then at once. We trust each other too truly to make any mistakes. He knows me, and I know him.'

'And I do not know you,' said Lady Machell, levelling her eyes at the girl with a look that made her lower her own. 'I had thought you unselfish, modest, sincere, with enough womanly dignity to make you understand your position in this matter, and to shrink from it as utterly unworthy and degrading. I find that I am mistaken. You have neither true love nor unselfishness, neither modesty nor dignity. It is a deep-laid scheme on your part, and my son is your victim.'

Muriel covered her face with her hands. She half wondered whether it were more righteous to bear these taunts for love of Arthur and faith in his words than to end them by ending the occasion for them. It was a bitter trial; and what if my lady spoke the truth? What if Arthur would really be better without her? But was not this too one of the temptations of which she had been forewarned?—a sign sent to prove the strength of her

love, the quality of her faith and courage? She would bear it all, and more; she would trust him; and at the moment when Lady Machell, thinking she had at last somewhat broken down that rebellious spirit, had made a step towards her to take her hand and promise to be her friend for life, Muriel, lifting her face from her hands, roused herself as if from a danger, and clearing her eyes went back to her old position.

'I must bear it,' she said in a low voice, not looking at my lady. 'It is cruel to say such things to me; but they must pass for what they are worth. I trust him, and believe what he tells me.'

'Then you will not renounce this engagement?'

'Not till he himself tells me that he wishes me to do so,' she said.

'And if I, who have watched him from his birth and know his whole nature, tell you that he will be thankful after a time to be free, that he will recognise it as the best thing, and be grateful to you for your unselfishness?'

'I believe that you think all this sincerely, Lady Machell,' poor Muriel answered, her tears falling rapidly; 'still I must trust him before all the world, even before you.'

'You are a shameless young woman!' cried Lady Machell, transported beyond herself. 'Your love is as immodest as it is selfish. Love! It is not in the nature of a good girl to care for any man in this frantic manner, and I am more than ever against the marriage, seeing what an undesirable person you are in yourself. Poverty, obscure birth, doubtful history—all are nothing compared to this shamelessness, this want of maidenly dignity and reserve!'

'Lady Machell, unsay that!' pleaded Muriel, clasping her hands. It was like a curse that she had hurled at her—Arthur's mother, and she to become one day Arthur's wife!

'No!' said my lady; 'I repeat it! You are a bold and dangerous schemer; and my son is lost for time and eternity unless I can detach him from you! But I can and I will!'

On which she swept from the scene, leaving Muriel leaning against a tree, feeling as if the very earth were no longer solid, life no longer real; while to my lady herself neither Jemima's millions nor Guy Perceval's prospective thousands were of avail or value because of this daughter of Heth who had taken possession of her son's fancy, and meant to keep what she had taken.

But when Arthur came crashing through the shrubbery bushes, as he did so soon as he saw his mother sweep up alone towards the house—when he took her in his arms, kissed her sweet pale face

again and again; told her how he revered her for her courage, how he loved her for her trust in him and adored her for her constancy—then poor Muriel's crushed heart began to expand again and her wounds to cease from smarting. She had passed through her hour of trial, and now she was rewarded and comforted. Her love was not his hurt, as the mother had said; no, it was his joy, his salvation, his one dearest hope and possession; and to doubt this would be to doubt that the sun shone in the sky or that there was a God in heaven; and to act on that doubt would be to ruin him from now to the day of his death—better indeed to make this the day of his death than to cast him off for any reason whatever. All of which was to Muriel like an anodyne in the midst of torture; like the softest music after howling discord; like peace and rest and silence after tumult and disturbance. It was confirmation; and even the most trustful natures need that when they have been sore tried.

If my lady could do nothing with Arthur, she was resolved that this puerile folly between Derwent and Hilda should be peremptorily stopped now on the instant. She remembered the teaching of cockatrice' eggs, and made up her mind that this at least should have no full-grown birth. Though he had saved the child's life, he should take nothing by his act, and should be excluded from Machells as rigorously—as his sister. Who were they, these penniless, unknown Smiths, who had dared to come in at both doors, disturbing the family peace and bringing such infinite disaster in their train? Inferior and audacious, they must be taught by severe discipline the lesson of their wrongdoing and the fact of their inferiority; and my lady was just the woman for the purpose.

But almost for the first time in her life she could not carry her husband with her. Sir Gilbert, who loved his little daughter and dreaded my lady's designs on Guy, argued that they owed something to the lad who had saved their child's life at the risk of his own, and that gratitude was a duty as well as the arrangement of liberal settlements. Wherefore he said they could not shut their doors against him, but were, on the contrary, bound to be tolerably kind to him, though—and here the good, kind, sleepy-headed baronet put on a stern look, which was as real as that old stone mask cut into the Aldobrandini rock—it was to be expressly understood that there was to be no more nonsense between him and Hilda. A youth who had not taken even his first step towards making his life was not a suitor to be encouraged for any man's daughter, and Hilda was too young for suitors at all. Still, they owed the lad something.

Even Wilfrid confessed the same thing, and allowed grimly that the boy had claims on them which as gentlemen they could not refuse to acknowledge; but, as he and his mother agreed, if their anger at his presumption did not destroy his claims to their gratitude, neither did his gallantry condone his insolence. If he were allowed to visit at the house it must be on the express condition that he did not presume to think of Hilda save as a being infinitely removed from his sphere. But how could he visit here when Muriel was excluded? The situation was altogether embarrassing, and made so much more difficult because of Arthur's folly. Had he not got into this entanglement with the girl, they might have patronised the boy with less danger than now; but as things were, the countenance given to Derwent would be assumed to extend to Muriel as well, and this, said my lady vigorously, could never be.

'Yet he saved our little one's life,' said Arthur quietly.

'And for this we are to fling her at his head, and allow the folly into which you have slipped to go on?' cried Lady Machell scornfully.

'For myself, I shall be far away as soon as Will's marriage is over,' Arthur answered; 'and Muriel's coming to the house will do no one any harm then. And as for Hilda, I am not sure that it would not be the best thing for both to let Derwent feel that at least he has a chance.'

Two days ago he would not have said this; but Derwent's bravery had touched that sympathy which every strong man has for courage; and though the boy was not one whom he would have chosen for his little sister, yet if he had it in him and could make a good thing of life?—and if Hilda liked him? Man for man he was better than Guy Perceval, and he might make his mark, who knows?

Lady Machell clasped her hands above her head in a paroxysm of anger and despair; while Wilfrid growled out an obscure something which, if spoken plainly before a magistrate, would have cost him five shillings; and even Sir Gilbert raised his mild eyes with wonder, and thought that surely Arthur's fever had not been got rid of yet, but that it had passed from his digestive organs to his brain and settled there.

'Hear me, mother,' Arthur continued. 'I do not think that Hilda should be engaged to anyone: it is sacrilege to think of marrying her for years to come. Let Derwent have a fair start in life, and a chance like any other; but neither he nor anyone,' with emphatic meaning, 'should be encouraged as a lover. Why, *she is but a child!*—the idea of her being married is revolting!'

'You are warped throughout, Arthur,' said Lady Machell, always angrily. 'It would be well to settle her at once if this disastrous absurdity of Mr. Derwent Smith is to be the result of waiting. If I cannot banish this wretched penniless adventurer from her mind, I shall marry her within the year to some one who can take care of her better than her brother has done.'

'No, no, my wife,' said Sir Gilbert mildly, but with unmistakable firmness; 'we must not be too precipitate. The child must be kept at home for some years yet, as Arthur says. She is scarcely out of her cradle yet, and to marry her would be a sin, let the man be who he may.'

'It would be destruction to give her to *that* man,' said Arthur warmly.

'A destruction which would have its compensation—which yours has not; neither in your grand scheme for her, nor your shameful choice for yourself,' was my lady's bitter reply.

'Mother, I cannot listen to such words!' cried Arthur, rising in extreme agitation. 'This is the second time that you have spoken of Muriel in this unworthy way. She a shame—a disgrace? It is a shame instead to say so!'

'She is what I have said,' returned his mother, looking him full between the eyes.

'Ah, mother! how can you be so untrue to your best self?' he cried. 'What is this disgrace which troubles you so much? Want of fortune! This is the shame of my marriage. With every virtue, every beauty, that a woman can have, of honourable parentage, with no relations to be ashamed of, she has no more fortune than myself—so that, in marrying her, I shall not be able to live without work! You have absolutely nothing but this to say against her; and to this I can only answer, that I would rather marry Muriel with nothing than any other woman with thousands, and that by principle I should at all times decline to accept my life at the hands of my wife.'

'You see what you wish to see, and are as foolish as a silly girl,' Lady Machell answered harshly. 'What do we know of this honourable family of hers? I do not say that her father is a scoundrel—they both acted with perfect good sense and good breeding to-day—but we know nothing of them; and for all that is satisfactory in such a matter they are nowhere.'

'Which cuts both ways,' said Arthur.

'I almost wish he were proved to be a returned convict. Then at least the affair would be at an end!' cried Lady Machell with temper.

'My wife!' remonstrated Sir Gilbert with a smile.

Wilfrid too relaxed into that grim grimace which stood for a smile with him, while Arthur laughed outright.

'Mother, mother, you are thorough!' he cried good-humouredly, restored to his usual brightness by the very force of her fear—the absurd fear—of supposing Mr. Smith of Owlett to be a returned convict; 'we must wait however till he is shown to be a ticket-of-leave man, like Miss Dinah's Bob, and meanwhile it is perhaps safest to believe that he is not.'

But neither emotion nor good temper, neither sweetness nor opposition, nor her own mistakes, stirred my lady. She had set her face like a flint against this marriage, and she was not to be softened anyhow; and even though the councils of the men of the family carried it over her wishes, and Derwent was to be allowed still to visit at the house which had known him for fifteen years, and the life of the only daughter of which he had saved, yet she neutralised the grace so far as she could, and influenced her daughter if she could not bend her sons. She had a long talk with Hilda that very night, and made her promise by all the gods most sacred to a girl—by her filial duty and her maidenly modesty; by her promise given, not so long ago, that she would always obey her mother and that she would religiously keep her word; by the fears which are so easily aroused in a young mind and the hopes that are already stirring; by all that had been and all that might be—that she would not even think of Derwent as a possible future lover, still less encourage him to think of himself as one.

She had no difficulty in this. Hilda was too well disciplined to resist her mother; and the blood of the Machells had also its part in her nature. She cried and felt herself cruelly used, but she said yes all the same; and when her mother kissed her, as she had kissed her once before, she bent her pretty head for the better fastening of her collar of slavery, and resolved to make herself as comfortable as circumstances would allow. There was very little fight in Hilda; she preferred instead of war and her own will submission and to be at peace. And then the main point with her was granted—Derwent was allowed to come to Machells; and this was enough for her, too young as she was to wish for a confessed engagement, or to care for more than the immediate pleasure of the moment.

Lady Machell had not stirred Muriel from her stronghold of trust and determination to abide by her promise, and neither did her own people. They forbade her engagement—the mother firmly, curtly, without explanation why; the father apologetically and with infinite distress. She answered them tenderly, kissed *them* tearfully; but she said that, although she would obey them

so far as not to see nor write to Arthur, she should always hold herself promised to him, and that she should look forward to being one day claimed by him as his wife—when they would consent.

From this position they could not stir her—not for all the prayers of the one, the severe commands of the other; not for all their arguments, which, never touching the secret truth, fell short of conviction; not for all their appeals to her pride, her duty, her fear. She stood firm and substantially calm amidst it all, and at the end no one had moved an inch from the position each had taken at the beginning.

‘She is your true child, Constance,’ said Edmund to his wife when they were alone and discussed this matter together—‘love and faith and constancy in one scale, and the loss of the world in the other!’

So there things stood—Arthur and Muriel obedient in action but resolute in spirit; Derwent hopeful under his restrictions; Hilda resigned and submissive; Arthur waiting only for Wilfrid’s marriage before making his own way clear, when he would force the consent of Muriel’s parents by the removal of the only obstacle assignable at this time; Muriel full of trust in his power, not only to make that way clear, but also to gain from his own people the consent she had no doubt hers would finally give. She was a girl who naturally took brave and cheerful views of things, because she was unsuspicious, even-tempered, and affectionate; and she felt that it was her duty now to look at the best side of matters, and not to embarrass anyone by tears or misgivings.

Whatever grace or good there had been in her innocent and happy girlhood, strengthened under her present trial into the richer nobleness of the tested woman, tried and not found wanting. Her very face grew grander in its lines as her thoughts went through love into sorrow, and her life had more fixity of purpose and more complexity of feeling; and beautiful as she had always been, she was more beautiful now than before. Even Derwent, for all his spirit of fraternal domination, recognised that divine something which had passed like a breath over her soul, and wakened it into power out of grace—that divine something which made him more ready now to rely on her judgment than to compel her to accept his own.

But then a certain change was working too in him, and the vanity which had been his boyish snare was becoming daily less potent and less visible. He had touched that important moment of a young man’s life when he is conscious that he must be and not only pose at seeming to be; when he must do, not dream. He wrote to his uncle Louis for that Viennese appointment which had

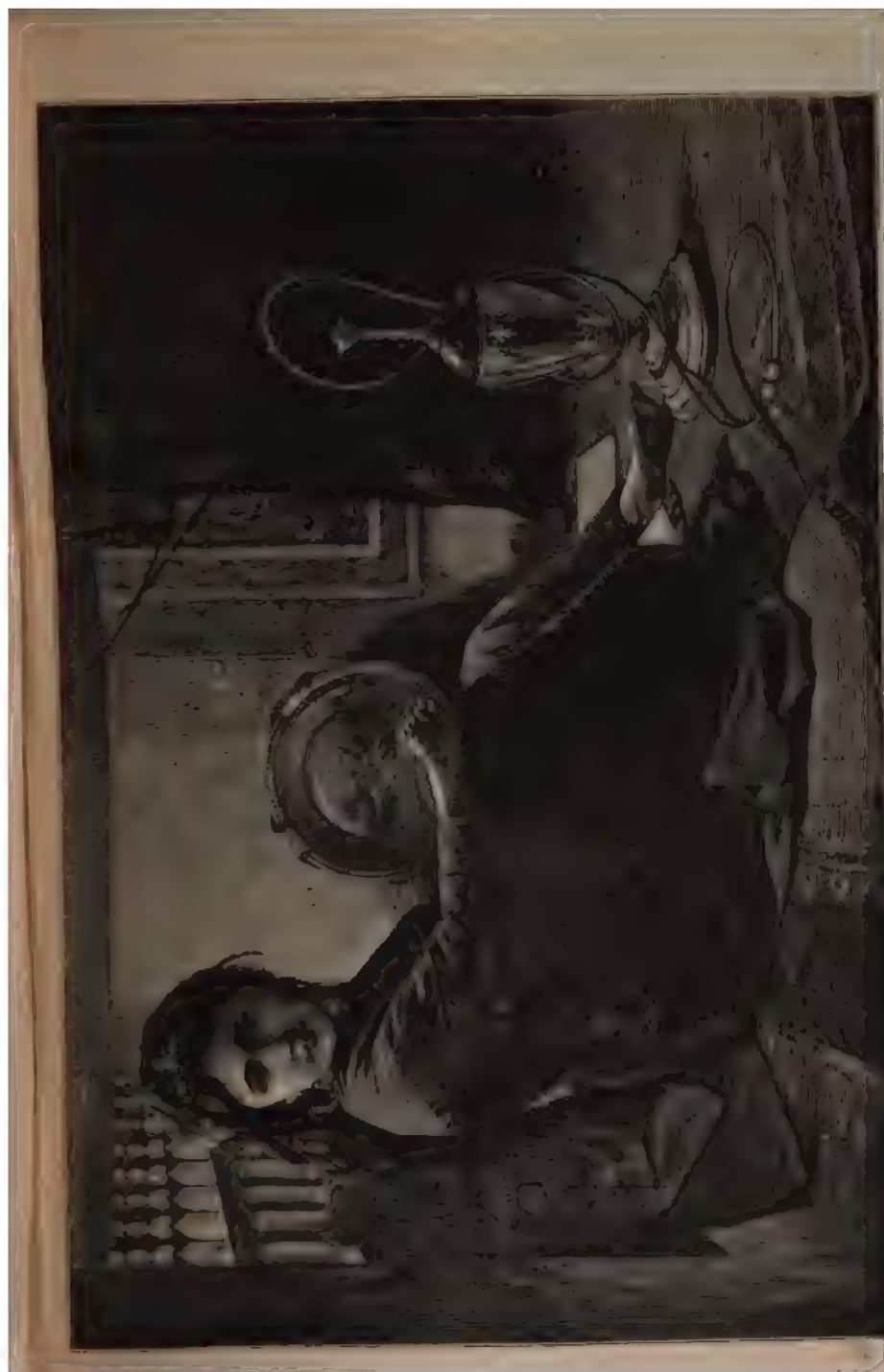
always been his ambition, and by which he hoped to win fame and wealth enough for Hilda's home—his father's nefarious slave-dealing in Africa having fallen a little into the background, and his first vague distrust having given place to a settled general coolness, but without further distinct suspicion. And when fairly launched in life he was sure, he used to say to Muriel, that he would make his way and succeed. If only Hilda would remain as true to him as his sister to Arthur, all would be well. And he thought that she would; he was sure that she would.

All this was very pleasant, very hopeful and cheering in the midst of the depressing facts which were undeniable, though none of the young people thought them irremovable; and the days ran smoothly, and with hope to guide them, when one morning Miss Aurora, who was burning to know how the two love-affairs of the family were going on, sent a note to Muriel, asking her to go up to Tower that afternoon, as she wanted her advice and assistance about some contributions to a bazaar which she had undertaken to send. And no one was so clever with her fingers as dear Muriel, said the gushing creature, as no one had such pretty little fingers to be clever with. There being no one else handy, she sent this note by Bob Rushton, with a message to give it to Miss Smith herself, and bring back her answer.

As the man came up the drive the horses were at the door. Derwent and Muriel were standing there prepared to mount; Mrs. Smith was out on the gravel walk, discussing the road which the young people were to take; while Edmund was feeling the legs of Muriel's chestnut, as a man fond of horses does when he has a chance. Bob, pondering always on how he could make that devotion of his to little Miss bring more than the guineas which both Arthur and Derwent had already given him—Derwent, by the way, intensely disgusted that a convicted thief should have even handled the rope by which Hilda was saved—came straight upon them as he entered the small gate which faced the drive before the house, and led through a side-door into the yard and offices.

He took off his cap, and the eyes of the men met. A strange gleam of intelligence shot from each to each; but Bob, making a rapid movement with his fingers, took no further notice of the master, though evidently an old acquaintance met unexpectedly—and that meeting not unpleasant.

Only when Miss, as he called Muriel, was reading the note, with another look and movement as rapid, as subtle, as undiscernible by an uninitiated bystander, he seemed to summon Mr. Smith to come to him as he himself drew a few paces off and stood with *his back* to the group as if for greater respect.



On some Astronomical Paradoxes.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

FOR many years the late Professor De Morgan contributed to the columns of the 'Athenæum' a series of papers in which he dealt with the strange treatises in which the earth is flattened, the circle squared, the angle divided into three, the cube doubled (the famous problem which the Delphic oracle set astronomers), and the whole of modern astronomy shown to be a delusion and a snare. He treated these works in a quaint fashion, not unkindly, for his was a kindly nature; not even earnestly, though he was thoroughly in earnest—yet in such sort as to rouse the indignation of the unfortunate paradoxists. He was abused roundly for what he said, but much more roundly when he declined further controversy. Paradoxists of the ignorant sort (for it must be remembered that not all are ignorant) are, indeed, well practised in abuse, and have long learned to call mathematicians and astronomers cheats and charlatans. They freely used their vocabulary for the benefit of De Morgan, whom they denounced as a scurrilous scribbler, a defamatory, dishonest, abusive, ungentlemanly, and libellous trickster.

He bore this shower of abuse with exceeding patience and good nature. He had not been wholly unprepared for it, in fact; and, as he had a purpose in dealing with the paradoxists, he was satisfied to continue that quiet analysis of their work which so roused their indignation. He found in them a curious subject of study; and he found an equally curious subject of study in their disciples. The simpler—not to say more foolish—paradoxists, whose wonderful discoveries are merely amazing misapprehensions, were even more interesting to De Morgan than the craftier sort who make a living, or try to make a living, out of their pretended theories. Indeed, these last he treated, as they deserved, with a scathing satire quite different from his humorous and not ungenial comments on the wonderful theories of the honest paradoxists.

There is one special use to which the study of paradox-literature may be applied, which—so far as I know—has not hitherto been much attended to. It may be questioned whether half the strange notions into which paradoxists fall must not be ascribed to the vagueness of too many of our scientific treatises. A half-understood explanation, or a carelessly worded account of some natural

phenomenon, leads the paradoxist, whose nature is compounded of conceit and simplicity, to originate a theory of his own on the subject. Once such a theory has been devised, it takes complete possession of the paradoxist's mind. All the facts he thenceforward hears of, which bear in the least on his favourite craze, appear to give evidence in its favour, even though in reality they are most obviously opposed to it. He learns to look upon himself as an unappreciated Newton, and to see the bitterest malevolence in those who venture to question his preposterous notions. He is fortunate if he do not suffer his theories to withdraw him from his means of earning a livelihood, or if he do not waste his substance in propounding and defending them.

One of the favourite subjects for paradox-forming is the accepted theory of the solar system. Our books on astronomy too often present this theory in such sort that it seems only a *successor* of Ptolemy's; and the impression is conveyed that, like Ptolemy's, it may be one day superseded by some other theory. This is quite enough for the paradoxist. If a new theory is to replace the one now accepted, why should not *he* be the new Copernicus? He starts upon the road without a tithe of the knowledge that old Ptolemy possessed, unaware of the difficulties which Ptolemy met and dealt with—free, therefore, because of his perfect ignorance, to form theories at which Ptolemy would have smiled. He has probably heard of the

centrics and eccentrics scribbled o'er
Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb,

which disfigured the theories of the ancients; but he is quite unconscious that every one of those scribblings had a real meaning, each being intended to account for some observed peculiarity of planetary motion, which *must* be accounted for by any theory which is to claim acceptance. In this happy unconsciousness that there are any peculiarities requiring explanation, knowing nothing of the strange paths which the planets are seen to follow on the heavenly vault,

Their wand'ring course now high, now low, then hid,
Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,

he placidly puts forward—and presently very vehemently urges—a theory which accounts for none of these things.

It has often seemed to me that a large part of the mischief—for let it be remembered that the published errors of the paradoxist are indicative of much unpublished misapprehension—arises from the undeserved contempt with which our books of astronomy too often treat the labours of Ptolemy, Tycho Brahe, and others who

advocated erroneous theories. If the simple truth were told, that the theory of Ptolemy was a masterpiece of ingenuity and that it was worked out by his followers in a way which merits the highest possible praise, while the theory of Tycho Brahe was placed in reality on a sounder basis than that of Copernicus, and accounted as well and as simply for observed appearances, the student would begin to realise the noble nature of the problem which those great astronomers dealt with. And again, if stress were laid upon the fact that Tycho Brahe devoted years upon years of his life to secure such observations of the planets as might settle the questions at issue, the student would learn something of the spirit in which the true lover of science proceeds. It seems to me, also, that far too little is said about the kind of work by which Kepler and Newton finally established the accepted theories. There is a strange charm in the history of those twenty years of Kepler's life during which he was analysing the observations made by Tycho Brahe. Surrounded with domestic trials and anxieties, which might well have claimed his whole attention, tried grievously by ill-health and bodily anguish, he laboured all those years upon erroneous theories. The very worst of these had infinitely more evidence in its favour than the best which the paradoxists have brought forth. There was not one of those theories which nine out of ten of his scientific contemporaries would not have accepted ungrudgingly. Yet he wrought these theories one after another to their own disproof. *Nineteen* of them he tried and rejected—the twentieth was the true theory of the solar system. Perhaps nothing in the whole history of astronomy affords a nobler lesson to the student of science—unless, indeed, it be the calm philosophy with which Newton for eighteen years suffered the theory of the universe to remain in abeyance, because faulty measurements of the earth prevented his calculations from agreeing with observed facts. But, as Professor Tyndall has well remarked—and the paradoxist should lay the lesson well to heart—'Newton's action in this matter was the normal action of the scientific mind. If it were otherwise—if scientific men were not accustomed to demand verification, if they were satisfied with the imperfect while the perfect is attainable—their science, instead of being, as it is, a fortress of adamant, would be a house of clay, ill fitted to bear the buffetings of the theologic storms to which it has been from time to time, and is at present, exposed.'

The fame of Newton has proved to many paradoxists an irresistible attraction; it has been to these unfortunates as the candle to the fluttering moth. Circle-squaring, as we shall presently see, has had its attractions, nor have earth-fixing and earth-flattening been neglected; but attacking the law of gravitation has been the

favourite work of paradoxists. Newton has been praised as surpassing the whole human race in genius; mathematicians and astronomers have agreed to laud him as unequalled; why should not Paradoxus displace him and be praised in like manner? It would be unfair, perhaps, to say that the paradoxist consciously argues thus. He, doubtless, in most instances, convinces himself that he has really detected some flaw in the theory of gravitation. Yet it is impossible not to recognise, as the real motive of every paradox-monger, the desire to have that said of him which has been said of Newton: '*Genus humanum ingenio superavit.*'

I remember a curious instance of this which occurred soon after the appearance of the comet of 1858. It chanced that, while that object was under discussion, reference was made to the action of a repulsive force exerted by the sun upon the matter of the comet's tail. On this, some one addressed a long letter to a Glasgow newspaper, announcing that he had long ago proved that the sun's attraction alone is insufficient to account for the planetary motions. His reasoning was amazingly simple. If the sun's attraction is powerful enough to keep the outer planets in their course, it must be too powerful for Venus and Mercury close by the sun; if it only just suffices to keep these in their course, it cannot possibly be powerful enough to restrain the outer planets. The writer of this letter said that he had been very badly treated by scientific bodies. He had announced his discovery to the Royal Astronomical Society, the Royal Society, the Imperial Academy at Paris, and other scientific bodies; but they had one and all refused to listen to him. He had forsaken or neglected his trade for several years in order to give attention to the new and, as he thought, the true theory of the universe. He complained in a specially bitter manner of the unfavourable comments which men of science had made upon his views in private letters addressed to him in reply to his communications.

There is something melancholy even in what is most ridiculous in cases of this sort. The simplicity which supposes that considerations so obvious as those adduced could escape the scrutiny, not of Newton only, but of all who have followed in the same track during two centuries, is certainly stupendous; nor can one fail to smile at seeing a difficulty, such as might naturally suggest itself to a beginner, and such as half-a-dozen words from an expert would clear up, regarded gravely as a discovery calculated to make its author famous for all time. Yet, when one considers the probable consequences of the blunder to the unhappy enthusiast, and perchance to his family, it is difficult not to feel a sense of pity, quite apart from that pity allied to contempt which is excited by

his mistake. A few words added to the account of Newton's theory, which the paradoxist had probably read in some astronomical treatise, would have prevented all this mischief. Indeed, this difficulty, which, as we have said, is a natural one, should be dealt with and removed in any account of the planetary system intended for beginners. The simple statement that the outer planets move more slowly than the inner, and so *require* a smaller force to keep them in their course, would have sufficed, not, perhaps, altogether to remove the difficulty, but to show the beginner where the explanation was to be looked for.

It was in connection with this subject of gravitation that one of the most well-meaning of the paradoxists—the late Mr. James Reddie—came under Professor De Morgan's criticism. Mr. Reddie was something more than well-meaning. He was earnestly desirous of advancing the interests of science, as well as of defending religion from what he mistakenly supposed to be the dangerous teachings of the Newtonians. He founded for these purposes the Victoria Institute, of which society he was the secretary from the time of its institution until his decease, eight or nine years since; and, probably, many who declined to join that society because of the anti-Newtonian proclivities of its secretary, were unaware that to that secretary the Institute owed its existence.

It so chanced that I had myself a good deal of correspondence with Mr. Reddie (who was, however, personally unknown to me). This correspondence served to throw quite a new light on the mental habitudes and the ways of thinking of the honest paradoxist. I believe that Professor De Morgan hardly gave Mr. Reddie credit for the perfect honesty which he really possessed. It may have been that a clear reasoner like De Morgan could hardly (despite his wide experience) appreciate the confusion of mind which is the normal characteristic of the paradoxist. But certainly the very candid way in which Mr. Reddie admitted, in the correspondence above named, that he had not known some facts and had misunderstood others, afforded to my mind the most satisfactory proofs of his straightforwardness.

It may be instructive to consider a few of those paradoxes of Mr. Reddie's which Professor De Morgan found chief occasion to pulverise.

In a letter to the Astronomer Royal, Mr. Reddie announced that he was about to write 'a paper, intended to be hereafter published, elaborating more minutely and discussing more rigidly than before the glaring fallacies, dating from the time of Newton, relating to the motion of the moon.' He proceeded to 'indicate *the nature of the issues he intended to raise.*' He had discovered

that the moon does not, as a matter of fact, go round the earth at the rate of 2,288 miles an hour, as astronomers say; but follows an undulatory path round the sun at a rate varying between 65,000 and 70,000 miles an hour; because, while the moon seems to go round the earth, the latter is travelling onwards at the rate of 67,500 miles an hour round the sun. Of course he was quite right in his facts, and quite wrong in his inferences; as the Astronomer Royal pointed out in a brief letter, closing with the remark that, 'as a very closely occupied man,' Mr. Airy could 'not enter further into the matter.' But further Mr. Reddie persisted in going, though he received no more letters from Greenwich. His reply to Sir G. Airy contained, in fact, matter enough for a small pamphlet.

Now here was certainly an amazing fact. A well-known astronomical relation, which astronomers have over and over again described and explained, is treated as though it were something which had throughout all ages escaped attention. It is not here the failure to comprehend the *rationale* of a simple explanation which is startling, but the notion that an obvious fact had been wholly overlooked.

Of like nature was the mistake which brought Mr. Reddie more specially under Professor De Morgan's notice. It is known that the sun, carrying with him his family of planets, is speeding swiftly through space—his velocity being estimated as probably not falling short of 20,000 miles per hour. It follows, of course, that the real paths of the planets in space are not closed curves, but spirals of different orders. How, then, can the theory of Copernicus be right, according to which the planets circle in closed orbits round the sun? Here was Mr. Reddie's difficulty; and like the other it appeared to his mind as a great discovery. He was no whit concerned by the thought that astronomers ought surely to have noticed the difficulty before. It did not seem in the least wonderful that he, lightly reading a book or two of popular astronomy, should discover that which Laplace, the Herschels, Leverrier, Airy, Adams, and a host of others, who have given their whole lives to astronomy, had failed to notice. Accordingly, Mr. Reddie forwarded to the British Association (in session at Newcastle) a paper controverting the theory of the sun's motion. The paper was declined with thanks by that bigoted body 'as opposed to Newtonian astronomy.' 'That paper I published,' says Mr. Reddie, 'in September 1863, with an appendix, in both thoroughly exhibiting the illogical reasoning and absurdities involved in the theory; and with what result? The members of Section A of the British Association, and Fellows of the Royal

Society and of the Royal Astronomical Society, to whom I sent copies of my paper, were, without exception, *dumb.* Professor De Morgan, however, having occasion to examine Mr. Reddie's publications some time after, was in no sort dumb, but in very plain and definite terms exhibited their absurdity. After all, however, the real absurdity consisted, not in the statements which Mr. Reddie made, nor even in the conclusions which he drew from them, but in the astounding simplicity which could suppose that astronomers were unaware of the facts which their own labours had revealed.

In my correspondence with Mr. Reddie I recognised the real source of the amazing self-complacency displayed by the true paradoxist. The very insufficiency of the knowledge which a paradoxist possesses of his subject, affords the measure of his estimate of the care with which other men have studied that subject. Because the paradoxist is ready to pronounce an opinion about matters he has not studied, it does not seem strange to him that Newton and his followers should be ready equally to discuss subjects they had not inquired into.

Another very remarkable instance was afforded by Mr. Reddie's treatment of the subject of comets. And here, by the way, I shall quote a remark made by Sir John Herschel soon after the appearance of the comet of 1861. 'I have received letters,' he said, 'about the comets of the last few years, enough to make one's hair stand on end at the absurdity of the theories they propose, and at the ignorance of the commonest laws of optics, of motion, of heat, and of general physics, they betray in their writers.' In the present instance, the correspondence showed that the paradoxist supposed the parabolic paths of some comets to be regarded by astronomers as analogous to the parabolic paths traversed by projectiles. He expressed no little astonishment when I informed him that, in the first place, projectiles do not travel on truly parabolic paths; and secondly, that in all respects their motion differs essentially from that which astronomers ascribe to comets. These last move more and more quickly until they reach what is called the vertex of the parabola (the point of such a path which lies nearest to the sun): projectiles, on the contrary, move more and more slowly as they approach the corresponding point of their path; and further, the comet first approaches and then recedes from the centre of attraction—the projectile first recedes from and then approaches the attracting centre.

The earth-flatteners form a considerable section of the paradoxical family. They experienced a practical rebuff, a few years since, which should to some degree have shaken their faith in the

present chief of their order. To do this chief justice, he is probably far less confident about the flatness of the earth than any of his disciples. Under the assumed name of Parallax he visited most of the chief towns of England, propounding what he calls his system of zetetic astronomy. Why he should call himself Parallax it would be hard to say; unless it be that the verb from which the word is derived signifies primarily to shift about or dodge, and secondarily to alter a little, especially for the worse. His employment of the word zetetic is less doubtful; as he claims for his system that it alone is founded on the true seeking out of Nature's secrets.

The experimental basis of the theory of Parallax is mainly this: Having betaken himself to a part of the Bedford Canal, where there is an uninterrupted water-line of about six miles, he tested the water-surface for signs of curvature; and (so he said) found none.

It chanced, unfortunately, that a disciple—Mr. John Hampden, of Swindon—accepted the narrative of this observation in an unquestioning spirit; and was so confident that the Bedford Canal has a truly plane surface, that he wagered five hundred pounds on his opinion, challenging the believers in the earth's rotundity to repeat the experiment. The challenge was accepted by Mr. Wallace, the eminent naturalist; and the result may be anticipated. Three boats were to be moored in a line, three miles or so between each. Each carried a mast of given length. If, when the summits of the first and last masts were seen in a line through a telescope, the summit of the middle mast was not found to be above the line, then Mr. Hampden was to receive five hundred pounds from Mr. Wallace. If, on the contrary, the top of the middle mast was found, as the accepted theory said it should be, to be several feet above the line joining the tops of the two outer masts, then Mr. Hampden was to lose the five hundred pounds he had so rashly ventured. Everything was conducted in accordance with the arrangements agreed upon. The editor of a well-known sporting paper acted as stakeholder, and unprejudiced umpires were to decide as to what actually was seen through the telescope. It need scarcely be said that the accepted theory held its own, and that Mr. Hampden lost his money. He scarcely bore the loss with so good a grace as was to have been expected from a philosopher merely desirous of ascertaining the truth. His wrath was not expended on Parallax, whom he might have suspected of having led him astray; nor does he seem to have been angry with himself, as would have seemed natural. All his anger was reserved for those who still continued to believe in the earth's rotundity. Whether

he believed that the Bedford water had risen under the middle boat to oblige Mr. Wallace, or how it came to pass that his own chosen experiment had failed him, does not appear.

The subsequent history of this matter has been unpleasant. It illustrates, unfortunately but too well, the mischief which may ensue from the tricks of those who make a trade of paradox—tricks which would be scarce possible, however, if text-books of science were more carefully written and by those only who are really acquainted with the subject of which they treat.

The book which originally led to Mr. Hampden's misfortunes, and has misled not a few, ought to have deceived none. I have already mentioned the statement on which Parallax (whose true name is Rowbotham) rested his theory. Of course, if that statement had been true—if he had, with his eye a few inches from the surface of the water of the Bedford Canal, seen an object close to the surface six miles from him—there manifestly would have been something wrong in the accepted theory about the earth's rotundity. So, also, if a writer were to announce a new theory of gravity, stating as the basis of his theory that a heavy missile which he had thrown into the air had gone upwards on a serpentine course to the moon, any one who accepted the statement would be logically bound to admit at least that the fact described was inconsistent with the accepted theory. But no one would accept such a statement; and no one should have accepted Mr. Rowbotham's statement.

His statement was believed, however, and perhaps is still believed by many. Twenty years ago, De Morgan wrote that 'the founder of the zetetic astronomy gained great praise from provincial newspapers for his ingenuity in proving that the earth is a flat, surrounded by ice,' with the north polar ice in the middle. 'Some of the journals rather incline to this view: but the "Leicester Advertiser" thinks that the statement "would seem to invalidate some of the most important conclusions of modern astronomy;" while the "Norfolk Herald" is clear that "there must be great error on one side or the other." . . . The fact is worth noting that from 1849 to 1857 arguments on the roundness or flatness of the earth did itinerate. I have no doubt they did much good, for very few persons have any distinct idea of the evidence for the rotundity of the earth. The "Blackburn Standard" and "Preston Guardian" (December 12 and 16, 1849), unite in stating that the lecturer ran away from his second lecture at Burnley, having been rather too hard pressed, at the end of his first lecture, to explain why the large hull of a ship disappeared before the masts. The persons *present and waiting* for the second lecture assuaged their disap-

pointment by concluding that the lecturer had slipped off the ice edge of his flat disc, and that he would not be seen again till he peeped up on the opposite side.' . . . 'The zetetic system,' proceeds De Morgan, 'still lives in lectures and books; as it ought to do, for there is no way of teaching a truth comparable to opposition. The last I heard of it was in lectures at Plymouth, in October 1864. Since this time a prospectus has been issued of a work entitled "The Earth not a Globe;" but whether it has been published I do not know.'

The book was published soon after the above was written, and De Morgan gives the following quaint account of it: 'August 28, 1865. The zetetic astronomy has come into my hands. When in 1851 I went to see the Great Exhibition I heard an organ played by a performer who seemed very desirous to exhibit one particular stop. "What do you think of that stop?" I was asked. "That depends on the name of it," said I. "Oh! what can the name of it have to do with the sound? 'that which we call a rose,' &c." "The name has everything to do with it: if it be a flute stop I think it very harsh; but if it be a railway-whistle stop, I think it very sweet." So as to this book: if it be childish, it is clever; if it be mannish, it is unusually foolish. The flat earth floating tremulously on the sea; the sun moving always over the flat, giving day when near enough, and night when too far off; the self-luminous moon, with a semi-transparent invisible moon created to give her an eclipse now and then; the new law of perspective, by which the vanishing of the hull before the masts, usually thought to prove the earth globular, really proves it flat;—all these and other things are well fitted to form exercises for a person who is learning the elements of astronomy. The manner in which the sun dips into the sea, especially in tropical climates, upsets the whole. Mungo Park, I think, gives an African hypothesis which explains phenomena better than this. The sun dips into the Western ocean, and the people there cut him in pieces, fry him in a pan, and then join him together again; take him round the under way, and set him up in the East. I hope this book will be read, and that many will be puzzled by it; for there are many whose notions of astronomy deserve no better fate. There is no subject on which there is so little accurate conception as on that of the motions of the heavenly bodies.¹ The author, though confident in the extreme,

¹ The Astronomer Royal once told me that he had found that few persons have a clear conception of the fact that the stars rise and set. Still fewer know how the stars move, which stars rise and set, which are always above the horizon, which move on large circles, which on small ones; though a few hours' observation on half-a-dozen nights in the year (such observations being continuous, but made only at hourly intervals) would show clearly how the stars move. It is odd to find even some who

neither impeaches the honesty of those whose opinion he assails, nor allots them any future inconvenience: in these points he is worthy to live on a globe and to rotate in twenty-four hours.'

I chanced to reside near Plymouth when Mr. Rowbotham lectured there in October 1864. It will readily be understood that, in a town where there are so many naval men, his lectures were not altogether so successful as they have sometimes been in small inland towns. Numbers of naval officers, however, who were thoroughly well assured of the fact that the earth is a globe, were not able to demolish the crafty arguments of Parallax publicly, during the discussions which he challenged at the close of each lecture. He was too skilled in that sort of evasion which his assumed name (as interpreted by Liddell and Scott) suggests, to be readily cornered. When an argument was used which he could not easily meet, or seem to meet, he would say simply: 'Well, sir, you have now had your fair share of the discussion; let some one else have his turn.' It was stated in the newspapers that one of his audience was so wrathful with the lecturer on account of these evasions, that he endeavoured to strike Parallax with a knobbed stick at the close of the second lecture; but probably there was no real foundation for the story.

Mr. Rowbotham did a very bold thing, however, at Plymouth. He undertook to prove, by observations made with a telescope upon the Eddystone Lighthouse from the Hoe and from the beach, that the surface of the water is flat. From the beach, usually only the lantern can be seen. From the Hoe, the whole of the lighthouse is visible under favourable conditions. Duly on the morning appointed, Mr. Rowbotham appeared. From the Hoe a telescope was directed towards the lighthouse, which was well seen, the morning being calm and still, and tolerably clear. On descending to the beach it was found that, instead of the whole lantern being visible as usual, only half could be seen—a circumstance doubtless due to the fact that the air's refractive power, which usually diminishes the dip due to the earth's curvature by about one-sixth part, was less efficient that morning than usual. The effect of the peculiarity was manifestly unfavourable to Mr. Rowbotham's theory. The curvature of the earth produced a greater difference than usual between the appearance of a distant object as seen from a certain high station and from a certain low station (though still the difference fell short of that which would be shown if there were no

write about astronomy making mistakes on matters so elementary. For instance, in a primer of astronomy recently published, it is stated that the stars which pass overhead in London rise and set on a slant—the real fact being that *those stars never rise or set at all, never coming within some two dozen moon-breadths of the horizon.*

air). But Parallax claimed the peculiarity observable that morning as an argument in favour of his flat earth. It is manifest, he said, that there is something wrong about the accepted theory; for it tells us that so much less of the lighthouse should be seen from the beach than from the Hoe, whereas less still was seen. And many of the Plymouth folk went away from the Hoe that morning, and from the second lecture in which Parallax triumphantly quoted the results of the observation, with the feeling, which had been expressed seven years before in the '*Leicester Advertiser*,' that 'some of the most important conclusions of modern astronomy had been seriously invalidated.' If our books of astronomy, in referring to the effects of the earth's curvature, had only been careful to point out how surveyors and sailors and those who build lighthouses take into account the modifying effects of atmospheric refraction, and how these effects have long been known to vary with the temperature and pressure of the air, this mischief would have been avoided. It would not be fair to say of the persons misled on that occasion by Parallax that they deserved no better; since the fault is not theirs as readers, but that of careless or ill-informed writers.

Another experiment conducted by Parallax the same morning was creditable to his ingenuity. Nothing better, perhaps, was ever devised to deceive people, apparently by ocular evidence, into the belief that the earth is flat—nor is there any clearer evidence of the largeness of the earth's globe compared with our ordinary measures. On the Hoe, some ninety or a hundred feet above the sea-level, he had a mirror suspended in a vertical position facing the sea, and invited the bystanders to look in that mirror at the sea-horizon. To all appearance the line of the horizon corresponded exactly with the level of the eye-pupils of the observer. Now, of course, when we look into a mirror whose surface is exactly vertical, the line of sight to the eye-pupils of our image in the mirror is exactly horizontal; whereas the line of sight from the eyes to the image of the sea-horizon is depressed exactly as much as the line from the eyes to the real sea-horizon. Here, then, seemed to be proof positive that there is no depression of the sea-horizon; for the horizontal line to the image of the eye-pupil seemed to coincide exactly with the line to the image of the sea-horizon. It is not necessary to suppose, here, that the mirror was wrongly adjusted, though the slightest error of adjustment would affect the result either favourably or unfavourably for Parallax's flat-earth theory. It is a matter of fact that, if the mirror were perfectly vertical, only very acute vision could detect the depression of the image of the sea-horizon below the image of the eye-pupil. The depression can

easily be calculated for any given circumstances. Parallax encouraged observers to note very closely the position of the eye-pupil in the image, so that most of them approached the image within about ten inches, or the glass within about five. Now, in such a case, for a height of one hundred feet above the sea-level the image of the sea-horizon would be depressed below the image of the eye-pupil, less than three hundredths of an inch—an amount which could not be detected by one eye in a hundred. The average diameter of the pupil itself is one-fifth of an inch, or about seven times as great as the depression of the sea-horizon in the case supposed. It would require very close observation and a good eye to determine whether a horizontal line seen on either side of the head were on the level of the centres of the eye-pupils, or lower by about one-seventh of the breadth of either pupil.

The experiment is a pretty one, however, and well worth trying by anyone who lives near to the sea-shore and sea-cliffs. But there is a much more effective experiment which can be much more easily tried—only it is open to the disadvantage that it at once demolishes the argument of our friend Parallax. It occurred to me while I was writing the above paragraph. Let a very small mirror (it need not be larger than a sixpence) be so suspended to a small support and so weighted that when left to itself it hangs with its face perfectly vertical—an arrangement which any competent optician will easily secure—and let a fine horizontal line or several horizontal lines be marked on the mirror; which, by the way, should be a metallic one, as its indications will then be altogether more trustworthy. This mirror can be put into the waistcoat pocket and conveniently carried to much greater heights than the mirror used by Parallax. Now, at some considerable height—say five or six hundred feet above the sea-level, but a hundred or even fifty will suffice—look into this small mirror while *facing* the sea. The true horizon will then be seen to be visibly below the centre of the eye-pupil—visibly in this case because the horizontal line traced on the mirror can be made to coincide with the sea-horizon exactly, and will then be found *not* to coincide with the centre of the eye-pupil. Such an instrument could be readily made to show the distance of the sea-horizon, which at once determines the height of the observer above the sea-level. For this purpose all that would be necessary would be a means of placing the eye at some definite distance from the small mirror, and a fine vertical scale on the mirror to show the exact depression of the sea-horizon. For balloonists such an instrument would sometimes be useful, as showing the elevation independently of the barometer, whenever any portion of sea-horizon was in view.

The mention of balloon experiences leads me to another delusive argument of the earth-flatteners.¹ It has been the experience of all aeronauts that, as the balloon rises, the appearance of the earth is by no means what would be expected from the familiar teachings in our books of astronomy. There is a picture in most of these books representing the effect of ascent above the sea-level in depressing the line of sight to the horizon, and bringing more and more into view the convexity of the earth's globe. One would suppose, from the picture, that when an observer is at a great height the earth would appear to rise under him, like some great round and well-curved shield whose convexity was towards him. Instead of this, the aeronaut finds the earth presenting the appearance of a great hollow basin, or of the concave side of a well-curved shield. The horizon seems to rise as he rises, while the earth beneath him sinks lower and lower. A somewhat similar phenomenon may be noted when, after ascending the landward side of a high cliff, we come suddenly upon a view of the sea—invariably the sea-horizon is higher than we expected to find it. *Only*, in this case, the surface of the sea seems to rise from the beach below towards the distant horizon convexly not concavely; the reason of which I take to be this, that the waves, and especially long rollers or uniform large ripples, teach the eye to form true conceptions of the shape of the sea-surface even when the eye is deceived as to the position of the sea-horizon. Indeed, I should much like to know what would be the appearance of the sea from a balloon, when no land was in sight (though I do not particularly wish to make the observation myself): the convexity discernible, for the reason just named, would contend strangely with the concavity imagined, for the reason now to be indicated.

The deception arises from the circumstance that the scene displayed below and around the balloon is judged by the eye from the experience of more familiar scenes. The horizon is depressed, but so little that the eye cannot detect the depression, especially where the boundary of the horizon is irregular. It is here that the text-book pictures mislead; for they show the depression as far too great to be overlooked, setting the observer sometimes about two thousand miles above the sea-level. The eye, then, judges the horizon to be where it usually is—on the same level as the observer; but looking downwards, the eye perceives, and at once appreciates

¹ In passing, let me note that, of course, I am not discussing the arguments of paradoxists with the remotest idea of disproving them. They are not, in reality, worth the trouble. But they show where the general reader of astronomical text-books and other such works, is likely to go astray, and thus conveniently indicate matters whose explanation may be useful or interesting.

if it does not even exaggerate, the great depth at which the earth lies below the balloon. The appearance, then, as judged by the eye, is that of a mighty basin whose edge rises up all round to the level of the balloon, while its bottom lies two or three miles or more below the balloon.

The zetetic faithful reason about this matter as though the impressions of the senses were trustworthy under all conditions, familiar or otherwise; whereas, in point of fact, we know that the senses often deceive, even under familiar conditions, and almost always deceive under conditions which are not familiar. A person, for example, accustomed to the mist and haze of our British air, is told by the sense of sight, when he is travelling where a clearer atmosphere prevails, that a mountain forty miles from him is a hill a few miles away. On the other hand, an Italian travelling through the Highlands is impressed with the belief that all the features of the scenery are much larger (because he supposes them much more remote) than they really are. A hundred such instances of deception might easily be cited. The conditions under which the aeronaut observes the earth are certainly less familiar than those under which the Briton views the Alps and Apennines, or the Italian views Ben Lomond or Ben Lawers. It would be rash, therefore, even if no other evidence were available, to reject the faith that the earth is a globe because, as seen from a balloon, it looks like a basin. Indeed, to be strictly logical, the followers of Parallax ought on this account to adopt the faith that the earth is not flat, but basin-shaped; which hitherto they have not been ready to do.

We have seen that Parallax describes a certain experiment on the Bedford Level, which, if made as he states, would have shown certainly that something was wrong in the accepted system—for a six-mile straight-edge along water would be as severe a blow to the belief in a round earth, as a straight line on the sea-surface from Queenstown to New York. Another curious experiment adorns his little book, which, if it could be repeated successfully before a dozen trustworthy witnesses, would rather astonish men of science. Having, he says, by certain reasoning—altogether erroneous, but that is a detail—convinced himself that, on the accepted theory, a bullet fired vertically upwards ought to fall far to the west of the place whence it was fired, he carefully fixed an air-gun in a vertical position, and fired forty bullets vertically upwards. All these fell close to the gun—which is not surprising, though it must have made such an experiment rather dangerous; but two fell back into the barrel itself—which certainly was very surprising indeed. One might fairly challenge the most experienced

gunner in the world to achieve one such vertical shot in a thousand trials; two in forty bordered on the miraculous.

The earth-flatteners I have been speaking of claim, as one of their objects, the defence of Scripture. But some of the earth-flatteners of the last generation (or a little further back) took quite another view of the matter. For instance, Sir Richard Phillips, a more vehement earth-flattener than Parallax, was so little interested in defending the Scriptures, that in 1793 he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for selling a book regarded as atheistic. In 1836 he attempted the conversion of Professor De Morgan, opening the correspondence with the remark that he had 'an inveterate abhorrence of all the pretended wisdom of philosophy derived from the monks and doctors of the Middle Ages, and not less those of higher name who merely sought to make the monkish philosophy more plausible, or so to disguise it as to mystify the mob of small thinkers.' He seems himself to have succeeded in mystifying many of those whom he intended to convert. Admiral Smyth gives the following account of an interview he had with Phillips: 'This pseudo-mathematical knight once called upon me at Bedford, without any previous acquaintance, to discuss "those errors of Newton, which he almost blushed to name," and which were inserted in the "*Principia*" to "puzzle the vulgar." He sneered with sovereign contempt at the "*Trinity of Gravitating Force, Projectile Force, and Void Space*," and proved that all change of place is accounted for by motion.' (Startling hypothesis!) 'He then exemplified the conditions by placing some pieces of paper on a table, and slapping his hand down close to them, thus making them fly off, which he termed applying the momentum. All motion, he said, is in the direction of the forces; and atoms seek the centre by "*terrestrial centripetation*"—a property which causes universal pressure; but in what these attributes of pushing and pulling differ from gravitation and attraction, was not expounded. Many of his "truths" were as mystified as the conundrums of Rabelais; so nothing was made of the motion.'

A favourite subject of paradoxical ideas has been the moon's motion of rotation. Strangely enough, De Morgan, who knew more about past paradoxists than any man of his time, seems not to have heard of the dispute between Keill and Bentley over this matter in 1690. He says, 'there was a dispute on the subject, in 1748, between James Ferguson and an anonymous opponent; and I think there have been others;' but the older and more interesting dispute he does not mention. Bentley, who was no mathematician, pointed out in a lecture certain reasons for believing that the moon does not turn on her axis, or has no axis on which she

turns. Keill, then only nineteen years old, pointed out that the arguments used by Bentley proved that the moon does rotate instead of showing that she does not. (Twenty years later Keill was appointed Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford. He was the first holder of that office to teach the Newtonian astronomy.)

In recent times, as most of my readers know, the paradox that the moon does not rotate has been revived more than once. In 1855 it was sustained by Mr. Jellinger Symons, one of whose staunchest supporters, Mr. H. Perigal, had commenced the attack a few years earlier. Of course, the gist of the argument against the moon's rotation lies in the fact that the moon always keeps the same face turned towards the earth, or very nearly so. If she did so exactly, and if her distance from the earth were constantly the same, then her motion would be exactly the same as though she were rigidly connected with the earth, and turned round an axis at the earth. The case may be thus illustrated: Through the middle of a large orange thrust one short rod vertically, and another long rod horizontally; thrust the further end of the latter through a small apple, and now turn the whole affair round the short vertical rod as an axis. Then the apple will move with respect to the orange as the moon would move with respect to the earth on the suppositions just made. No one in this case could say that the apple was turning round on its axis, since its motion would be one of rotation round the upright axis through the orange. Therefore, say the opponents of the moon's rotation, no one should say that the moon turns round on her axis. Of course, the answer would be obvious even if the moon's motions were as supposed. The moon is not connected with the earth as the apple is with the orange in the illustrative case. If the apple, without rigid connection with the orange, were carried round the orange so as to move precisely as if it were so connected, it would unquestionably have to rotate on its axis, as any one will find who may try the experiment. Thus for the straight rod thrust through the apple substitute a straight horizontal bar carrying a small basin of water in which the apple floats. Sway the bar steadily and slowly round, and it will be found (if a mark is placed on the apple) that the apple no longer keeps the same face towards the centre of motion; but that, to cause it to do so, a slow motion of rotation must be communicated to the apple in the same direction and at the same rate (neglecting the effects of the friction of the water against the sides of the basin) as the bar is rotating. In my *Treatise on the Moon* I have described and pictured a simple apparatus by which this experiment may easily

be made. But, of course, the experiment is not essential to the argument by which the paradox is overthrown. This argument simply is, that the moon as she travels on her orbit round the sun—the real centre of her motion—turns every part of her equator in succession towards him once in a lunar month. At the time of new moon the sun illuminates the face of the moon turned from us; at the time of full moon he illuminates the face which has been gradually brought round to him as the moon has passed through her first two quarters. As she passes onwards to new moon again, the face we see is gradually turned from him until he shines full upon the other face. And so on during successive lunations. This could not happen unless the moon rotated. Again, if we lived on the moon we should find the heaven of the fixed stars turning round from east to west once in rather more than twenty-seven days; and unless we supposed, as we should probably do for a long time, that our small world was the centre of the universe, and that the stars turned round it, we should be compelled to admit that it was turning on its own axis from west to east, once in the time just named. There would be no escape. The mere fact that all the time the stars thus seemed to be turning round the moon, the earth would not so seem to move, but would lie always in the same direction, would in no sort help to remove the difficulty. Lunarian paradoxists would probably argue that she was in some way rigidly connected with the moon; but even they would never think of arguing that their world did not turn on its axis, *unless* they maintained that it was the centre of the universe. This, I think, they would very probably do; but as yet terrestrial paradoxists have not, I believe, maintained this hypothesis. I once asked Mr. Perigal whether that was the true theory of the universe—the moon central, the earth, sun, and heavens carried round her. He admitted that his objections to accepted views were by no means limited to the moon's rotation; and, if I remember rightly, he said that the idea I had thrown out in jest was nearer the truth than I thought, or words to that effect. But as yet the theory has not been definitely enunciated that the moon is the boss of the universe.

Comets, as already mentioned, have been the subjects of paradoxes innumerable; but as yet comets have been so little understood, even by astronomers, that paradoxes respecting them cannot be so readily dealt with as those relating to well-established facts. Among thoroughly paradoxical ideas respecting comets, however, may be mentioned one whose author is a mathematician of well-deserved repute—Professor Tait's 'Sea-Bird Theory' of Comets' Tails. According to this theory, the rapid formation of long tails and the

rapid changes of their position may be explained on the same principle that we explain the rapid change of appearance of a flight of sea-birds when, from having been in a position where the eye looks athwart it, the flight assumes a position where the eye looks at it edgewise. In the former position it is scarcely visible (when at a distance), in the latter it is seen as a well-defined streak; and as a very slight change of position of each bird may often suffice to render an extensive flight thus visible throughout its entire length, which but a few moments before had been invisible, so the entire length of a comet's tail may be brought into view, and apparently be formed in a few hours, through some comparatively slight displacement of the individual meteorites composing it. This paradox—for paradox it unquestionably is—affords a curious illustration of the influence which mathematical power has on the minds of men. Everyone knows that Professor Tait has potential mathematical energy competent to dispose, in a very short time, of all the difficulties involved in his theory; therefore few seem to inquire whether this potential energy has ever been called into action. It is singular, too, that other mathematicians of great eminence have been content to take the theory on trust. Thus Sir W. Thomson, at the meeting of the British Association at Edinburgh, described the theory as disposing easily of the difficulties presented by Newton's comet in 1680. Glaisher, in his translation of Guillemin's '*Les Comètes*,' speaks of the theory as one not improbably correct, though only to be established by rigid investigation of the mathematical problems involved. In reality, not five minutes' inquiry is needed to show anyone acquainted with the history of long-tailed comets that the theory is quite untenable. Take Newton's comet. It had a tail ninety millions of miles long, extending directly from the sun as the comet approached him, and seen, four days later, extending to the same distance, and still directly from the sun, as the comet receded from him in an entirely different direction. According to Tait's sea-bird theory, the earth was at both these epochs in the plane of a sheet of meteorites forming the tail; but on each occasion the sun also was in the same plane, for the edge of the sheet of meteorites was seen to be directly in a line with the sun. The comet's head, of course, was in the same plane; but three points, not in a straight line, determine a plane. Hence we have, as the definite result of the sea-bird theory, that the layer or stratum of meteorites, forming the tail of Newton's comet, lay in the same plane which contained the sun, the earth, and the comet. But the comet crossed the ecliptic (the plane in which the earth travels round the sun) between the epochs named, crossing it at a great angle. When crossing it, then, the great layer of meteorites was

in the plane of the ecliptic; before crossing it the layer was greatly inclined to that plane one way, and after crossing it the layer was greatly inclined to that plane another way. So that we have in no way escaped the difficulty which the sea-bird theory was intended to remove. If it was a startling and, indeed, incredible thing, that the particles along a comet's tail should have got round in four days from the first to the second position of the tail considered above, it is as startling and incredible that a mighty layer of meteorites should have shifted bodily in the way required by the sea-bird theory. Nay, there is an element in our result which is still more startling than any of the difficulties yet mentioned; and that is, the singular care which the great layer of meteorites would seem to have shown to keep its plane always passing through the earth, with which it was in no way connected. Why should this preference have been shown by the meteor flock for our earth above all the other members of the solar system?—seeing that the sea-bird theory *requires* that the comet, and not Newton's comet alone, but all others having tails, should not only be thus complaisant with respect to our little earth, but should behave in a totally different way with respect to every other member of the sun's family.

We can understand that, while several have been found who have applauded the sea-bird paradox for what it *might* do in explaining comets' tails, its advocates have as yet not done much to reconcile it with cometic observation.

The latest astronomical paradox published is perhaps still more startling. It relates to the planet Venus, and is intended to explain the appearance presented by this planet when crossing the sun's face, or, technically, when in transit. At this time she is surrounded by a ring of light, which appears somewhat brighter than the disc of the sun itself. Before fully entering on the sun's face, also, the part of Venus's globe as yet outside the sun's disc is seen to be girt round by a ring of exceedingly bright light—so bright, indeed, that it has left its record in photographs where the exposure was only for the small fraction of a second allowable in the case of so intensely brilliant a body as the sun. Astronomers have not found it difficult to explain either peculiarity. It has been proved clearly in other ways that Venus has an atmosphere like our own, but probably denser. As the sun is raised into view above the horizon (after he has really passed below the horizon plane) by the bending power of our air upon his rays, so the bending power of Venus's air brings the sun into our view round the dark body of the planet. But the new paradox advances a much bolder theory. Instead of an atmosphere such as ours, Venus has a glass envelope; and instead of a surface of earth and

water, in some cases covered with clouds, Venus has a surface shining with metallic lustre.¹ The author of this theory startled astronomers by announcing, four or five years ago, that with an ordinary telescope he could see the light of the sun's corona without the aid of an eclipse, though astronomers had observed that the delicate light of the corona fades out of view with the first returning rays of the sun after total eclipse.

The latest paradoxist, misled by the incorrect term 'centrifugal force,' proposes to 'modify, if not banish,' the old-fashioned astronomy. What is called centrifugal force is in truth only inertia. In the familiar instance of a body whirled round by a string, the breaking of the string no more implies that an active force has pulled away the body, than the breaking of a rope by which a weight is pulled implies that the weight has exerted an active resistance. Of course, here again the text-books are chiefly in fault.

Such are a few among the paradoxes of various orders by which astronomers, like the students of other sciences, have been from time to time amused. It is not altogether, as it may seem at first sight, 'a sin against the twenty-four hours' to consider such matters; for much may be learned not only from the study of the right road in science, but from observing where and how men may go astray. I know, indeed, few more useful exercises for the learner than to examine a few paradoxes, when leisure serves, and to consider how, if left to his own guidance, he would confute them.

¹ Sterne anticipated this paradoxist in (jestingly) attributing glassiness to an inferior planet. He made the inhabitants, however, not the air, glassy. 'The intense heat of the country,' he says, speaking of the planet Mercury, 'must, I think, long ago have vitrified the bodies of the inhabitants to suit them for the climate; so that all the tenements of their souls may be nothing else, for aught the soundest philosophy can show to the contrary, but one fine transparent body of clear glass; so that till the inhabitant grows old and tolerably wrinkled, whereby the rays of light become monstrously refracted, or return reflected from the surface, &c., his soul might as well play the fool out o' doors as in her own house.'

The Last of the Season.

I.

THERE could be no doubt as to the fact. She drove by me in the Park, and bowed—an actual *bonâ-fide* bow. For several months I had endeavoured to catch her eye, and now she had graciously inclined her head and smiled upon me sweetly as I leaned airily on a Park railing. I glanced round to see whether anyone was envying me, and felt disappointed because my good fortune had been witnessed only by a diminutive street-boy and an unsympathetic life-guardsmen. But no matter, she had bowed and I was triumphant.

She was neither young, beautiful, nor sylph-like. As far as I knew, she was neither wealthy nor witty. Her fascination lay in her *entourage*; in a word, she was ‘in society.’

My step was light and my pulses bounded with honest pride as I strutted to the Club to calm my bubbling spirits with a cigar. Entering the vestibule, I was handed a letter, or rather a sheet of note-paper, so fashioned as to serve as letter and envelope in one. Its ends were open, and it carried a halfpenny stamp. The address was correct—‘F. Killjoy Esq., Geranium Club, St. James’s Street.’ Hm! who could my parsimonious correspondent be?

I tore open the missive, and glanced at the writing.

‘Holy Blue!’ I cried, and sank into the hall porter’s seat. ‘This is too sudden.’ The note-paper fell from my fingers to the tiled floor, and a host of fond anticipations crowded into my brain. There it lay, my admission into society, until I picked it up, once more to gaze upon its enchanting but scratchy characters.

MR. KILLJOY,—

DOWAGER VISCOUNTESS DAWLISH

At Home.

4 to 7.

To meet the Patagonian Ambassador.

200 Park Street, July 20th.

Meet the Patagonian Ambassador to-morrow, drink tea and eat strawberries from four o’clock till seven! Not a particularly invigorating way of spending an afternoon, perhaps; but then I had never seen a Patagonian.

The arrival of these Antipodean curiosities had given a mild fillip to the languishing season. The end of all things fashion-

able was at hand. The Eton and Harrow match had been played, Patti had sung for her benefit at Covent Garden, right honourable members were yawning on ministerial benches, and all of us were panting for sea breezes or mountain air. Indeed, the best people were leaving town when the Patagonians took up their abode at the Alexandra Hotel, and became the heroes of the fortnight. But upon the first appearance of these stolid savages, even the jaded brightened up for one last flicker, and half-a-dozen afternoons and three garden parties were given in order that certain ladies might keep up their reputations as successful stalkers of lions.

Not the least conspicuous among these huntresses was the lady who bowed to me in the Park.

Selina, Viscountess Dawlish, was an exemplary woman, who, having achieved a position after years of persistent fighting, was not likely to lose it through lack of energy or tact. A quarter of a century ago she had been married to an impecunious peer, who started a stud with her money, and galloped into the Bankruptcy Court in due course. The daughter of a cotton spinner and the wife of a viscount, Selina was not likely to forget what was due to her new-fangled dignity. She was quietly ignored at first by the great ladies of society, and in her turn she fiercely snubbed those unfortunates who courted her smiles. But she was young, had intelligence, resource, and, what was worth both put together, good taste. She carried herself modestly and demurely before the women into whose houses she coveted admission, and never flirted but in her own boudoir. In course of time, she was looked upon as an amiable and harmless little person who would oblige a friend, keep a secret, and never encourage a husband or a son by idle or premeditated coquetry. To the men she was always a sympathetic friend, an artful and successful flatterer, who was ever ready with advice, the result of a good memory and better tact. Then she started pleasant little dinners of eight at a round table, and took care that the dulness of 'high life' was always enlivened by the presence and conversation of wittier inhabitants of an inferior sphere. An Attorney-General, if sufficiently engaging, might be met at Park Street; the last popular novelist, and even the adapter of a naughty comedy from the French, would occasionally be bidden and be glad to come. These dinners became successes. The great ladies knew that if they dined with Selina, they would be amused and flattered by the Bohemians, without running the slightest risk of encountering the females of that kind—a wholesome and very natural horror of whom exists in the patrician lady's bosom. So Selina, Viscountess Dawlish, be-

came tolerable, presently popular, and was finally accepted as a partner or shareholder in the profits and the joys which an established position in 'the beautiful world' affords.

We of the Geranium knew all about Lady Dawlish; how she had been left a widow without even the melancholy satisfaction of being mother to a peer, how her three daughters were still unmarried, though, as their intimate friends asserted, they were old enough and willing. We remembered the story about the Honourable Sybil and the young Marquis of Teddington; for although scarcely a member of the Geranium was in society, there wasn't one who did not affect to know the private doings of everyone who was.

It was just at the commencement of the season, some time in April I think, that I was introduced to Lady Dawlish. Young Temple of the Grenadiers presented me, almost by accident, I must confess. It was in the vestibule at Covent Garden, on the night of Albani's first appearance this year, and there was a terrible crush inside, for it was raining Niagara without. I was making my way through the crowd when 'Lady Dawlish's carriage stops the way' was shouted from the door. The poor lady and two of her daughters were jammed in by the crowd unable to reach their brougham, and certain that in a few seconds the vehicle would be ordered on by the police, not to return for at least three-quarters of an hour.

'I say, Killjoy,' and a man I knew slightly tapped me on the shoulder, 'do me a favour.'

I was willing, of course.

'Give your arm to Miss Dawlish, and push through the crowd. Aunt, let me introduce: Mr. Killjoy—Lady Dawlish.'

She bowed, so did the daughters. Charlie Temple marched away with a lady on each arm, and I followed escorting a third. The carriage was reached just as the coachman was ordered to drive on by the official, and I was rewarded by three slight bows. There was nothing very impressive or winning about these bows, but they were distinctly symptoms of grateful recognition, on the part of these aristocrats, of my prompt and chivalrous courtesy.

'Much obliged,' said Temple curtly. 'Have a weed?'

'Thanks,' I answered. 'I didn't know you were related to the Dawlishes.'

'Oh lor yes. Ta-ta.' And he jumped into a hansom and vanished.

I must confess that, although I have had occasion to admire and be grateful to Lieutenant and Captain Charles Walsingham Temple his behaviour on that occasion did not inspire me with many symptoms of violent regard. I had been treated just like a play-bill

—I was wanted, I was used, I was thrown aside. Two nights afterwards I tried to catch Lady Dawlish's eye, but she didn't or wouldn't see me. I met her at a flower-show in Regent's Park, but never a glance did I get; at Lord's I passed her carriage three times—once I am certain she looked at me—she took me for somebody else, very possibly; but she recollected in time, and turned aside to some lobster salad. So the season sped on, and I, who am considered an acquisition in Kensington and a *parti* in Bayswater, was ignored and snubbed in Mayfair.

But at last, at the end of the season, I am rewarded with a smile and an afternoon party. No doubt she had failed to notice me—perhaps she is short-sighted. To be sure she is; does her ladyship not carry a gold-rimmed *pince-nez* on the arch of her Roman nose?

Just as I am leaving the Club to return to my rooms to dress for the evening, old Thomas, a half-pay Indian officer, stops me.

'Will you make the fourth in a rubber to-morrow afternoon at four, Killjoy?'

'No,' answer I, trying to impart a tone of regret into my voice. 'No, I'm engaged; promised to go to Lady Dawlish's. Very sorry!'

'A-a-ah!' muttered my friend, and he chuckled to his idiotic old self. 'She's at it again this year, eh? But, by the way, you are a distinguished novelist—hm! Ah! well, don't let them flatter you too much, or you'll be married before you get a shot at the grouse.'

Could it be true? I burned for literary fame as one of the paths towards social distinction. Was it possible that that awful novel which had cost me a year to write, 200*l.* to publish, and, after the criticisms appeared, as many sleepless nights through which to repent—could these three much-maligned volumes be appreciated by one individual, and that individual the æsthetic Lady Dawlish?

Delicious thought! and I revelled in it.

II.

FIVE o'clock, and no Patagonians!

I could see that the generally expressionless countenance of Lady Dawlish was puckered with anxiety, although her manner was calm, that her eyes constantly wandered to the door even when she was smiling to a compliment from a Bulgarian Christian who had come to London for English sympathy and sovereigns.

The Honourable Sybil was mildly flirting with an Austrian *attaché*

in the back drawing-room, Charlie Temple was yawning on a settee not far off, and I, not knowing a soul, was standing stiff and defiant against the wall, trying to look bored, but in reality marking the features and endeavouring to catch the title of every ancient lady in the room.

My reception half-an-hour ago had been gracious enough. 'So good of you to come, Mr. Killjoy,' Lady Dawlish had simpered; 'you must be as amusing as possible, mind; and shall I introduce you?—but of course you know everyone in the room.'

I then shook hands with Sybil and bowed across the piano to Araminta and Olivia. The damsels returned to my respectful salutation inclinations of their heads, as if they wished to be civil but couldn't, and went on with their gossip.

A Herr somebody had strummed a sonata on the grand piano, and a little snub-nosed Frenchwoman had sung a Parisian love song with much *chic* and go. I had swallowed three cups of tea, not because I was thirsty, but for want of somebody to talk to, and everyone was anxious to see the Patagonians.

Presently Lady Millefleurs arrived, exquisitely decorated by Worth. She was a gushing little person, and talked as fast as a cataract.

'Dear Lady Dawlish, so kind of you to give us this treat;' and the little woman glanced round the room, and included myself in her observation. 'But,' she added in a lower key, 'I am horribly disappointed—he seems quite civilised and commonplace?'

'Hush,' whispered Lady Dawlish, and took her aside.

I comprehended the Millefleurs' chagrin. She had come to see a Patagonian, and, as I was the only outsider in the room, she had very naturally taken me for the interesting object of her visit. The fact was ludicrous, but annoying; I felt humiliated, and began to wish myself in the smoking-room of the Geranium. Park Street was after all by no means as pleasant as Bayswater.

Presently, Sybil advanced and made herself pleasant. She is not an unattractive girl; she has full grey eyes and a figure which might be called graceful but for a certain inflexibility of outline which shows itself even through her morning toilette. I once heard a man say that the Honourable Sybil had many good points; I began to realise that she had too many.

On the other hand, she has that indescribable air of good breeding which does not reveal itself in the selection of words which are generally commonplace enough, but rather in the confidence and the easy delivery with which they are uttered.

'Been ridin' to-day, Mr. Killjoy?' asked she winningly, sinking gracefully into a settee.

Now, the fact is, that I do not show myself to advantage on horseback. Not but that I am a skilful and energetic rider, but it has pleased Providence during the last few years to add a certain rotundity to my once symmetrical waist. I have a keen sense of the ridiculous: I do not ride in the Park.

‘No, Miss Dawlish; I was rather better employed.’

‘Oh, yes? playin’ pool!’

‘No; writing.’

‘Oh, indeed!’

Then, wishing to give her a notion of my importance, I added, ‘I was writing at my book. Another novel.’

‘I didn’t know you were clever,’ said she. ‘How nice!’ And Miss Sybil turned aside to conceal a yawn, as I thought.

But after the yawn or the blush she took more interest in me. She knew I was a Worcestershire man, of course; should I be there for the shooting, or should I remain late in Scotland?

All this was delightful. I wasn’t at all certain that my cousin, the head of our family, would invite me down to the shooting; in fact, I generally passed my August, September, and October at the seaside—Trouville, Scarborough, Dieppe, and Brighton. Still, I was not going to confess that I didn’t go the round of at least a dozen good houses in the visiting season. In fact, I rather gave her to understand that I did.

But she didn’t seem impressed. Of course, why should she?

Presently there is a stir at the door, and a stately menial announces—

‘His Excellency Señor Don Emmanuel de Todos Santos.’

Upon which all look as if the Señor Don were the very last person they cared to see, instead of being the interesting and intelligent foreigner they had met to stare at.

Lady Dawlish steps towards the door, but judge her disappointment. Instead of a procession of half-a-dozen stalwart and gigantic Patagonians, a rotund little personage clad in a dress coat, morning waistcoat and trousers, and carrying half-a-dozen decorations at his button holes, smiles and bows to the company at the door.

His native tongue is bastard Portuguese, his French is unintelligible, of English he does not know a word; in short, the Patagonians, not being able to agree on an ambassador to St. James’s, had hired a foreigner and sent him to London with a Patagonian retinue.

Señor Don Emmanuel looked remarkably like a thief, and very probably was one. Appearances were decidedly against him; and his intellectual endowments, owing possibly to inability on his part to illustrate them, were hard to find.

In point of fact, he was a social failure ; and as British investors did not seize with alacrity the chances of immediate and permanent profit which he offered them through a state loan, Don Emmanuel was regarded by his stalwart employers as a financial failure likewise. But at the time I describe the Patagonians had not found him out.

So as 'the object' proved less interesting even than the outsider, and as the visitors were more or less tired of each other—the season had been long and eventful—Lady Dawlish's drawing-room in the course of half-an-hour was nearly empty. I drank another cup of tea, shot down my shirt cuffs, and prepared to depart.

'Don't go, Mr. Killjoy, unless you have an appointment,' said Lady Dawlish, guessing my intention. 'I want two words with you. You know my daughter Olivia, I think?' and her ladyship swept to the other end of the room, leaving me face to face with Olivia. Now, this young lady is only just 'out.' She lacks the ease, the imperturbability, the *savoir-vivre* of her elder sister, goes in for being thought clever, says smart things, and is invariably rude. She evidently thought me a dolt and 'bad form,' and her opinion did not excite my tongue into any of the clever repartees I always keep in stock. If I had met her at Bayswater, I should have been master of the dialogue in a trice. But in Park Street the peerage awed me, and instead of rejoining with epigram I feebly moaned in platitudes.

Presently Lady Dawlish came back. 'Mr. Killjoy, will you excuse ceremony and go with us to the opera—Her Majesty's; it is the last night but one?'

Heavens! how my heart leapt! Olivia, taken off her guard, almost started with surprise. I accepted the invitation of course, and hurried off to my chambers to dress. I shall never be able to adequately describe that evening at the opera. True, town was rather empty, consequently my luck was the less envied and my joy thereby lessened; but I sat in a peeress's box behind Sybil's chair, with Lady Dawlish occasionally lavishing on me a smile. Sybil thawed considerably, and smiled once or twice when I said a good thing. She never laughed, and I was secretly chagrined at the time, for I felt that either she knew the source of the joke or didn't trouble herself with the application thereof. I could never make her understand what an original person I was. In this regard, however, I soon found out my mistake. In houses ruled by people like Lady Dawlish it is worse than a crime to be clever. Envious, hateful, malicious, and uncharitable you may be at convenient seasons, but witty—never. Wit sounds professional, and

Dawlishes leave all such qualities to the adventurers who live by them.

At that period, only a month or so ago, there was something about Sybil attractive enough. She dressed well and in perfect taste, and gradually one forgot all about her points. Then she had a voice, and sang with plenty of execution and finish, but with little sympathy. She reflected high credit on her instructors, but the applause she received at the conclusion of a song was due rather to a sense of relief on the part of the listener than from any sympathetic chord the singer might have touched. Despite this failing, of which she was mightily proud, Sybil had admirers, and had every right to them.

During the week following I met my interesting and aristocratic friends on several occasions. It is not extraordinary how easily opportunities for 'accidental' meetings may be obtained when both sides are parties to the accident. At a water-party at Twickenham, at a dinner at Skindle's, and at a cricket match at Prince's, I enjoyed the society of Lady Dawlish, and the commonplace but pleasant conversation of the Honourable Sybil. I began also to find myself appreciated on the score of my intellect and accomplishments. Lady Dawlish, when at a loss for a word or in want of a simile, would turn to Mr. Killjoy, 'who was so clever, and whose judgment was always so sound,' or would subtly flatter me by bantering me with my extravagance when I brought her a bit of blue china out of my own collection, which, by the way, I had inherited. By degrees I began to feel as much at home in Park Street as I used to feel in Bayswater. Her ladyship was sympathetic, indulgent even, and Sybil, when she was not singing, was gracious, and mildly interesting. Moreover, she has an undeniable ankle; I know this, because she flirts more with her feet than with her eyes. In more respects than one, I am a man of acute observation.

So a fortnight passed: we had reached the first week of August, and still Lady Dawlish had not made up her mind where to go for the next month. Sybil hated Limerick, in which county they possessed a small country-house, and Lady Dawlish objected to Homburg, Sybil's paradise, as too expensive. Pending a definite resolution, they remained in town. One obstacle to my comfort was removed. Charlie Temple had taken himself away.

'Poor boy!' said Lady Dawlish one evening, referring to him. 'He is very fond of Sybil, as I dare say you know, Mr. Killjoy, but what can I do? He has only 500*l.* a-year and his pay, and I have told Sybil over and over again I positively cannot increase her

portion of 10,000*l.* The attachment of course is absurd, for I cannot afford to keep a son-in-law, however nice he may be.'

I sympathised with her ladyship as deeply as I was able.

'I have no right to bore you with family matters, Mr. Killjoy, but it is so pleasant to have a friend in whose discretion you can rely, and we poor women sadly want advice and support.'

I consoled her, and suggested all sorts of wild and impossible schemes for the amelioration of humanity generally and herself particularly.

'Always good and thoughtful, dear Mr. Killjoy ;' and her ladyship pressed my hand and turned away to shed a tear. Great Jove ! how I had wronged this woman ! I had thought her wily and worldly ; I found her pure, womanly, tender, appreciative, sympathetic. I called at Park Street all the oftener after this little scene, and spent quiet evenings from 9.30 till 11 over chess and weak tea—'So much better for a young man than a Club,' as Lady Dawlish observed.

Thus I found myself drifting into matrimony ; for though I never was passionately attached to Sybil, I felt that the tepid regard which I bore her might ripen into good fellowship, and that her position and family were matters which no well-conducted man in my station of life could afford to disregard. True, she never exerted herself to convince me that I had gained any mastery over her virgin affections, and, with the exception of that peculiarity before alluded to, she laid no violent siege either to my vanity or my heart.

Still things could not go on like this for ever. My visits could not be prompted either by mere civility or anxiety as to the physical and moral condition of the Dawlish family. My constant attendance in Park Street would be noticed—was noticed very likely, and some termination must be arrived at. Should I implore the Honourable Sybil to marry me, or should I ask Olivia, or, happier thought still, should I wed the Viscountess herself ?

When I put the question to myself, I discovered that Sybil was the nearest and of all others dearest. Her dainty slippers and clocked ankles had conquered even my antipathy to her voice. My senses had been won through the eyes, although my ears vainly protested against the victory.

One evening we sat in the drawing-room in Park Street after dinner. Night was falling, and we enjoyed that delicious twilight which to persons who have dined well suggests precisely the train of thought each diner is fondest of revelling in. Lady Dawlish was presumably dozing in an easy-chair ; Sybil, who had been engaged in stitching at some feminine frippery, reclined,

'languishing and lazy,' in a low settee, near which I had placed myself. I had been talking to her in my most poetic and unintelligible vein, and she was either occupied in considering my thoughts, or had fallen asleep in pondering over them. To this day I know not which. She had not been singing, and I felt that she was very dear to me indeed. There is an ecstasy too eloquent for words—too sacred even to be broken by a sigh. At that moment I enjoyed that ecstasy.

But twilight is destroyed by the approach of wax candles and cups of tea.

'A letter for your ladyship,' said the menial.

'Ah! from Charlie Temple,' returned Lady Dawlish, regarding the hand-writing. As the lady spoke, her daughter Sybil started, and began to labour at her frippery once more.

I saw her ladyship's face fall as she read her letter. Then her marble forehead was puckered with frowns, and she coloured with passion. I watched her with anxiety, for I felt that ill tidings were forthcoming. The letter was contained in a few lines written on the front page; for her ladyship, after scanning them, folded the paper carefully, replaced it methodically in its envelope, and sat gazing before her with her hands clasped upon her lap. Sybil was evidently alarmed. At last, after an ominous silence, her mother spoke.

'So, Mr. Killjoy, you are an impostor.'

'I beg your pardon, Lady Dawlish,' I cried.

'An impostor, sir, neither more nor less. Read that letter.'

Sybil shivered, and walked to the window. I read the letter.

Phoenix Club, Dublin.

My dear Aunt,—You will be delighted to know that I have got the appointment I have long desired—it adds something to my pay, and means promotion. By the way, I think you are making a mistake about your friend Killjoy. He is not *the* Killjoy of Worcester, but a retired lieutenant of militia, and a great *as* to boot. But of course you have found out both these facts long ago.

Your affectionate nephew,

C. W. TEMPLE.

The reference was hardly complimentary to myself, but I was more dazed than surprised. Then I turned the letter over and read more MS. I made up my mind at once.

'Well, sir, what have you to answer to the charge?'

'I have only to say, Lady Dawlish, that I never presented myself to you in borrowed plumes. I have not mentioned even the name of my distant relation.'

'Stuff!' cried her ladyship; 'you know as well as I do that unless you were a member of a county family, or a man of genius,

I should never have admitted you here. And presuming on the mistake I was goose enough to make, you have endeavoured to engage the affections of my daughter.'

'Madam!'

'Don't answer me, you monster of ingratitude. Sybil and I will never recover from the disgrace.'

'Disgrace! Indeed, Lady Dawlish!' Then I felt mad, and was determined to give her blow—not a very chivalrous proceeding perhaps, but pardonable. 'Excuse my interference, but I think you have not read the postscript to this letter, here on the third page.'

She seized the paper, and read what had before escaped her eyes.

P.S.—Sybil and I love each other; you know it, but you will not allow her to marry me, yet you have declared that she must be married this season for the sake of her sisters' chances next. I feared to go to Ireland, leaving her here to be handed over to the first pecunious and well-born nincompoop you might meet. Your wish, dear aunt, has accordingly been gratified without your knowledge. Sybil is married: she married me two weeks ago at the Registrar's office. Now I have got my appointment I confess all, for to-morrow I shall be in town, and will take her away for our honeymoon. In a month we sail for Canada.

P.P.S.—Poor Killjoy! He is an ass, but still we have all been rather too hard on him. I'll write and thank him some day for the great assistance he has been to Sybil and myself. Pray forgive my fib—I only told you he was his own second cousin.

Lady Dawlish did not receive this intelligence with her usual philosophic indifference. Indeed, she gave every indication of impending hysterics; and whilst Sybil ministered to her needs I—crestfallen, indignant, and humiliated—rushed from the house.

Since this bitter experience of society I have shunned Mayfair, and for ever will be true to my again beloved Bayswater.

The Opera Ballet.

BY H. BARTON BAKER.

ONE need not be very old to remember the time when the ballet was the principal attraction of the opera, when great prima donnas sang to languid half-filled houses, and burned with jealousy of *premières danseuses*, for whom all eagerness was reserved, and to welcome whose appearance every seat was crammed. 'There is nothing at present,' says Mr. Lumley, in his 'Reminiscences of the Opera' (1864), 'that can be compared with the almost frenzied enthusiasm which a popular *danseuse* could create twenty years ago. Many persons of rank and fashion, had they been frank enough to avow their opinion openly, would have emphatically declared that they looked forward to the ballet as the attraction of the season. Modern opera-goers can form but little idea of the eagerness with which the list of the *danseuses* was scanned, or the sensation excited by a new dance or a new ballet.' All this has passed away, the glories of Terpsichore have departed, and stage dancing has become a lost art, for the barbaric gyrations and limb-twistings which now represent it have no affinity with the grace and beauty of a Taglioni and an Elssler. All arts—painting, music, acting, singing—have become vulgarised, but dancing has become brutalised.

To Italy we are indebted for the opera, to France for the ballet. Early in the seventeenth century these entertainments were performed at the French Court, and rose to great magnificence under Louis XIV., the King and the greatest ladies frequently taking part in them. But it was the Duchess du Maine who first invented the *ballet d'action*, that is to say, a story told by pantomime and dancing, and several of these were magnificently performed at her famous château at Sceaux. The first of which we have any record in this country was composed by a man named Weaver, a dancing-master of Shrewsbury. It was called 'The Loves of Mars and Venus;' it seems, however, to have been a pantomime rather than a ballet. It was not until 1734, upon the appearance of the celebrated Mademoiselle Sallé, that the ballet proper was brought upon the London stage. She was probably the first great *danseuse* that had been seen there, and her success was enormous. Besides being a proficient in her art, the lady had some inventive talent. As Clairon, assisted by Lekain, was

the first reformer of tragedy costume, so did Sallé apply herself to the appropriate dressing of the ballet, the performers in which, whether personating Greeks, Romans, or Turks, were accustomed to wear the full-bottomed wigs and full-skirted coats of the period. Great was the astonishment when, in the ballet of 'Pygmalion and Galatea,' she appeared, not in wig and stiff brocade, but in a Grecian robe clinging close to her form. Her acting in this part is said to have been very fine—her first awaking from inertia, her first timid step, her wonderment at all about her, and afterwards her beautiful and graceful dancing so full of meaning and expression. It was in this she made her first appearance at Covent Garden, and at once became the rage of 'the town,' which had never before seen anything so refined and artistic.

At the representation given for her benefit, people fought at the doors of the theatre; an infinity of amateurs were obliged to conquer at the point of the sword, or at least with their fists, the places which had been sold to them by auction and at enormous prices. As Mademoiselle Sallé made her last curtsy, and smiled upon the pit with the most charming grace, furious applause burst forth from all parts and seemed to shake the theatre to its foundation. While the whirlwind howled, while the thunder roared, a hailstorm of purses full of gold fell upon the stage, and a shower of bon-bons followed in the same direction. These bon-bons, manufactured at London, were of a singular kind, guineas—not like the doubloons, the louis d'or in paste, that are exhibited in the shop windows of our confectioners, but good genuine guineas in metal of Peru, well and solidly bound together—formed the sweetmeat; the *papillote* was a bank note.* The performance brought Mademoiselle Sallé more than 200,000 francs.

But as a rule French dancers were not received with much favour at the theatres during the last century, and the engagement of a troupe by Garrick in 1754 caused a riot.

On the Continent the rage for ballet compelled composers to introduce something of this species of entertainment into all their operas, however inappropriate it might be. The celebrated Vestris, 'le dieu de danse,' as he christened himself, was omnipotent in Paris. He believed there were only three great men in Europe—himself, Frederick the Great, and Voltaire. 'Here, boy,' said the elder to his son one day, 'kiss this foot, which has enchanted all the world.' When Glück was writing his 'Iphigenia in Tauris,' he came to him and said, 'You must write me the music of a *chacone* for this.' 'Do you think,' exclaimed Glück indignantly,

* There were three generations of Vestrises—each exceeding the other in ability.

'that the Greeks, whose manners we are trying to represent, knew anything about a *chacone*?' 'Did they not?' answered Vestris, much amazed. Then in a tone of deep commiseration, he added, 'How I pity them!'

Our constant wars with France deprived us of all good dancers, for in that country alone was there thorough training for this art. Sometimes the Parisians let us have a *danseuse* whose popularity was on the wane, such as Mademoiselle Guimard, who appeared at the King's Theatre in 1789. Lord Mount Edgcumbe, noticing this appearance in his 'Reminiscences,' says that, 'although sixty years of age,' she was full of grace, and danced most exquisitely. But the lady was not nearly so old as his lordship represents, having been born in 1743. Madeline Guimard was a noble woman as well as a fine artiste, and during the terrible distress that preceded the revolution, spent a large portion of her earnings in relieving the starving people, and this without breathing a word to anyone of her charitable deeds. The wars with the Republic and the Empire entirely cut off our supplies of Parisian *danseuses* for the next twenty years and more; and even for some time after the peace the French were terribly loth to allow *perfidious Albion* to have any but second-class artistes whom they did not care to keep. As the opera-dancers were trained by an academy under the immediate control of a Minister, none could leave that country without permission.

Upon becoming lessee of the Opera House, in 1821, Mr. Ebers resolved to make a desperate effort to bring over some of the stars of the Parisian ballet. Of such importance were these negotiations, that they had to be conducted through the medium of the English ambassador at Paris, who put himself in communication with the Baron de la Ferté, the Intendant of the Theatres. The artistes especially desired were the then reigning favourites of the dance—Albert and Noblet. The Intendant received the application with all suavity, but threw every possible obstacle in the way of granting it. After, however, as much duplicity and diplomacy as might have been required to bring about a treaty between two hostile nations, it was arranged that the desired ones should be spared to Albion for two months. For their services, Albert was to receive 50*l.* for each performance, and Noblet 550*l.* for the entire engagement; in addition to which, 25*l.* was to be allowed each for the expenses of the journey. Two other celebrated dancers, Coulon and Bias, were engaged upon the same terms, together with three others, two males at 430*l.* and 240*l.* each, and a lady at 270*l.* The incense offered to Noblet might have turned any female brain. She was run after by the aristocracy, invited

everywhere, literally worshipped; she was the universal theme of conversation; the fashionable world could think of nothing else. The Earl of Fife, then one of the principal patrons of the opera, placed a carriage at her disposal during her stay, and every Sunday gave dinner-parties in her honour.

No sooner was the rehearsal announced than all the men of fashion, and all who were, or would be thought, judges of the graceful, thronged with applications for admission, paying for the liberty of being present as at a regular representation. Nor was the curiosity confined to the gentlemen; ladies of the first rank and fashion found their way to the theatre, and partook largely of the interest excited by the new arrivals.

These children of Terpsichore being so splendidly received did not care to leave their comfortable quarters at the expiration of the given time. Upon which there was great excitement in Paris; the perfidy of Albion had this time passed beyond the limits of endurance, since it treacherously desired to deprive France even of its dancers. Urgent remonstrances were made by the French Academy, and the Baron de la Ferté sent over a special envoy to negotiate the return of the recalcitrants. After much disputation, it was arranged that the desired ones should remain in London until the end of the season, and that henceforth two first and two second dancers should be allowed to come over every season from the schools of the Academy, and that in return a pledge was to be given that no dancer should be brought from Paris contrary to the wishes of the Academy. A treaty to this effect was drawn up in full form, signed, sealed, and witnessed.

From this season of 1821 may be dated the rise of the ballet to its supreme position. In stating the accounts of the season, Mr. Ebers informs us that while the opera cost 8,636*l.*, the expense of the ballet was 10,678*l.* The prima donna, Madame Camporese, an immense favourite and a fine singer, received only 1,650*l.* for the season, while the principal male dancer, Albert, was paid 1,785*l.*, and the *première danseuse* Noblet 1,537*l.* There was the same discrepancy throughout. De Begnis and his wife Ronzi de Begnis, Madame Vestris, and Ambrogetti, all fine artistes, received but 600*l.* each; while two second dancers, Bias and Deshayes, were paid respectively 650*l.* and 930*l.* It had been stipulated by the first treaty that, at the end of Albert and Noblet's engagement, two other dancers of equal fame, Paul and Anatole, should take their places; consequently, when the former arranged to remain until the end of the season, the manager found himself saddled with double expenses—which, to gratify his aristocratic patrons, he had to endure. In addition to the salaries before

stated, Paul took 1,200*l.* for half the season, Anatole 1,300*l.*, and the Vestrises, the dancers, father and son, 1,200*l.* What will particularly strike the reader in these accounts is the enormous sums paid to a class of artists who have wholly disappeared—that of the male dancer. No ballet was possible without their assistance, and many of them were not only consummate pantomimists, but very beautiful executants. Albert is said to have been the most graceful that had ever been seen at the London opera, while Paul ‘seemed literally to fly as he bounded from the stage, so light and zephyry were his motions.’ I do not suppose any of us would care for them now, accustomed as we are to see ladies in even what are technically called ‘the breeches parts.’ A proof we have by no means advanced in purity of feeling since our grandfathers’ time.

In regard to appointments, the opera appears to have been in a very meagre condition when Mr. Ebers undertook its management. ‘The same scenes, the same dresses, and the same decorations,’ he says, ‘figured in every performance, till the eye was wearied and the imagination disgusted by seeing different countries and ages all exhibiting the same scenes and costumes. Nor was the scarcity of dresses confined to the *coryphées* and *figurantes* of the ballet and the inferior characters of the opera; the *premiers sujets* were as sparingly appointed. Every other theatre,’ he goes on to say, ‘gave correct scenery and costume, with every possible degree of magnificence; it was only at the opera scenes and dresses were mean and inappropriate.’ He mentions it as worthy of particular note that he introduced repeated changes of dress in the same performance, and that in the ballet of ‘Aline’ the dresses were three times varied! He would be somewhat astonished, were he living, to see the number of times the pantomime ballet of even an East-end or transpontine theatre change their costumes nowadays.

But it was not until the world-famous reigns of Taglioni and Fanny Elssler that the ballet reached its highest development and popularity. A critic happily defined Taglioni as the poetry, Elssler as the wit, of motion. Their styles were entirely different. Nothing like the chaste and exquisite movements of the former has ever been seen before or since. But Elssler was more than a *danseuse*—‘she was the only artist of the century, perhaps, who combined in so striking a degree the two talents of actress and dancer.’ The immense sensation created by Taglioni is still well within the memory of middle-aged people.

“‘La Sylphide’ marks a ballet epoch,’ says Mr. Chorley in his ‘Musical Recollections,’ ‘as a work that introduced an

element of delicate fantasy and fairyism into the most artificial of all dramatic exhibitions, one which to some degree poetised it. After "La Sylphide" were to come "La Fille de Danube" and "Giselle" (containing some of Adolphe Adam's best music), "L'Ombre," and a score of ballets, in which the changes were rung on Naiad and Nereid life, on the ill-assorted love of some creature of the elements for an earthly mortal. The purity and ethereal grace of Mdle. Taglioni's style suggested the opening of this vein, as it also founded a school of imitators. Then her mimic powers, however elegant, were limited. Her face had few changes. Her character dances, as in "Guillaume Tell," "La Bayadère," were new and graceful; but their seduction and piquancy were to be outdone. When she touched our cold English ground, however, the Sylph excited as much enthusiasm as the most idolised songstress can now do. But, he adds, 'there was a little sameness in her effects. Mdle. Elssler's dignified and triumphant beauty of face and form would have made her remarkable whatever dress she wore, in whatever world she appeared. There was more, however, of the Circe than of the Diana in her smile. A mistress of the grand and artificial art of dancing, she possessed many more resources than Mdle. Taglioni. . . . The exquisite management of her bust and arms (one of the hardest things to acquire in dancing) set her apart from everyone whom I have seen before or since. Nothing in execution was too daring for her, nothing too pointed. If Madame Taglioni flew, she flashed. The one floated on to the stage like a nymph, the other showered every sparkling fascination round her like a sorceress. Her versatility, too, was complete; she had every style, every national humour under her feet—she could be Spanish for the Spaniards, or Russian for the Northerners, or Neapolitan for those who love the delicious Tarantula. But beyond these Mdle. Elssler, as an actress, commanded powers of high and subtle rarity.' Speaking of her acting in the ballet of 'The Gipsy,' upon which Balfe founded his 'Bohemian Girl,' and of the scene in which she dances a minuet to distract attention from her lover, who is concealed hard by in danger of his life, the same writer continues:—'Few things have been seen more fearful than the cold and measured grace of Mdle. Fanny Elssler in this juncture, than the manner in which every step was watched, every gesture allowed its right time, so that neither flurry nor flattery might be detected, than the set smile, the vigilant ear, the quivering lips controlling itself. It was by representations such as these that Fanny Elssler gradually established a fame among the few as well as the many which could have been built up by no pirou-

ettes nor *entrechats*, but in right of which she is enrolled among the great dramatic artists of the century.'

One of her greatest triumphs was in the ballet of the 'Tarantula,' which is the story of a girl who pretends to be tarantula-mad that she may dance an elderly suitor into declining her hand. 'The manner in which she wrought its whimsical scenes up to a climax; the grace, the daring, the incessant brilliancy, the feverish buoyancy, and the sly humour with which she managed to let the public into the secret that her madness was only feigned, raised this ridiculous farce to the level of a work of art.' In private life it is said that the most prudish man or woman might have passed days in her society without being recalled to any recollection of the scanty stage dress, and the attitudes more fitted for sculpture than for social life; in short, by any look, gesture, or allusion belonging to the dancer's craft. Upon visiting America she created an astounding furor. Divines offered her their pews at meeting-houses; students serenaded her; rich men showered gold and diamonds upon her instead of bouquets.

Besides these empresses of the dance, there were queens that were scarcely inferior to them: the charming Cerito, Adèle Dumilâtre, the very incarnation of grace, and fascinating Carlotta Grisi. In 1843 Dumilâtre, in 'Les Houris,' nightly crowded 'Fop's Alley;' and in 'Un Bal sous Louis XIV,' the minuet de la cour in which Ellsler was her cavalier, became the rage. 'Ondine' with Cerito made an equal sensation, while the divine Fanny eclipsed them all in the 'Delire d'un Peintre.' Then there was the world-famous 'Cachuca,' which was ground on every organ, whistled by every boy, and attempted on the boards of every provincial theatre. And with this wonderful combination were found musical stars of equal splendour—Grisi, Persiani, Mario, Lablache, &c. It makes one wish oneself a little older in order to have seen and heard these things.

Mr. Lumley, in his 'Reminiscences,' tells some amusing stories of the relatives and hangers-on of the artistes, a most objectionable class of people—how admirably Jules Janin drew them in one of his *feuilletons*—who are constantly stirring them to revolt, as if the unfortunate *impresario* had not sufficient to distract him in the natural caprices of his troupe, which require no artificial stimulant. There was a père Cerito who considered his nightly presence as necessary as that of his daughter, and always spoke of her as *we*—'*Nous* avons dansé magnifiquement ce soir,' he would say. Such persons were not to be offended, or they would certainly revenge themselves through their daughters in some disagreeable fashion. The celebrated singer Ronconi was frequently attacked

by 'hoarseness' and 'indisposition'—the effects of the domestic atmosphere—and unable to appear. Madame Ronconi had failed, and avenged her disappointment by occasionally making her husband disappoint the public. The manager knew this, but was powerless to prevent it. One day he called upon the indisposed artist in company with a physician. Ronconi, in a painful, hollow whisper, expressed his regret that he could not appear that evening. But the manager was as cunning as he, and led him on to a topic he was certain would throw him off his guard. The *ruse* succeeded. In a few moments the basso was speaking excitedly in a loud clear voice. He declared the presence of the physician had effected the miraculous cure.

But to return. On June 10, 1843, there appeared in the theatrical news of the 'Examiner' the following paragraph:—'A Spanish *danseuse*, Donna Lola Montez, made her appearance between the acts of the opera on Saturday, and executed a characteristic step called "El Olano." The Donna was destitute of those graces which impart such a charm to the French and Italian dancers; but there was a certain intensity of expression, and, as it seemed, a certain nationality, which gave her a peculiar interest. In spite of the encouraging reception she met, she has not danced since Saturday, which remains a mystery.' Such was the announcement of the first public appearance of this thereafter notorious lady. Mr. Lumley accounts for 'the mystery.' He says the lady was introduced to him by a certain nobleman as the daughter of a celebrated Spanish patriot and martyr, and represented as a dancer of consummate ability; he very soon discovered that in both particulars he had been deceived—that she was not a Spaniard, but an Englishwoman, and, although singularly beautiful, and with a certain novelty of style, had no pretensions to the name of artist or *danseuse*. Yet the public received her with every sign of enthusiasm. Nevertheless, he would not allow her to appear after the first two or three nights. The story of this lady's life is too well known to be related here, even did it come within the scope of so brief a paper.

The novelty of 1845 was the 'Viennoise' children. A dancing-mistress of Vienna had trained thirty-six little girls into a *corps de ballet*. Their marvellous success in the Austrian capital induced the English *impresario* to offer to engage them. The Austrian authorities interposed; they feared to allow these young lambs to trust themselves within the wolf-fold of the heretics, at least so it was whispered. But these difficulties were ultimately overcome, and the little ladies made their *débuts* before a London public. Their success was very great. They were splendidly trained, and

executed their dances with a precision little short of marvellous. Their greatest performance was the 'Pas de Miroir,' in which one division performed a very elaborate dance before a gauze intended to represent a mirror, while another part on the opposite side went through the reverse movements so accurately that the illusion of a reflected dance was perfect.

Lucille Grahn, who, the critics said, combined the ideal forms of Taglioni with the realism of Elssler and the sprightliness of Carlotta Grisi, appeared in the same season. Nor among the *danseuses* must we forget the *danseurs*—the celebrated Perrot, St. Leon, and M. Charles. The ballet of 'Eoline,' with Lucille Grahn, rivalled the past popularity of the 'Sylphide' and 'Ondine;' and the 'Mazurka d'Extase,' with Perrot, excited almost as much enthusiasm as Elssler's 'Pas de Fascination.' Taglioni reappeared, after an absence, that same year. But the great event of all—indeed, the greatest in the whole history of the ballet—was the famous 'Pas de Quatre.' How it was brought about must be told in the words of its projector, Mr. Lumley.

'With such materials in my grasp as the four celebrated *danseuses*, Taglioni, Carlotta Grisi, Cerito, and Lucille Grahn, it was my ambition to unite them all in one striking *divertissement*. But ambition, even seconded by managerial will, scarcely sufficed to put so audacious a project into execution. The government of a great state was but a trifle compared to the government of such subjects as those whom I was *supposed* to be able to command; for these were subjects who considered themselves far above mortal control, or, more properly speaking, each was a queen in her own right—alone, absolute, supreme. . . . But there existed difficulties even beyond a manager's calculations. Material obstacles were easily overcome. When it was feared that Carlotta Grisi would not be able to leave Paris in time to rehearse and appear for the occasion, a vessel was chartered from the Steam Navigation Company to waft the sylph at a moment's notice across the Channel; a special train was engaged and ready at Dover; relays of horses were in waiting to aid the flight of the *danseuse* all the way from Paris to Calais. In the execution of the project the difficulties were again manifold. Every twinkle of each foot in every *pas* had to be nicely weighed in the balance, so as to give no preponderance. Each *danseuse* was to shine in her peculiar style and grace to the last stretch of perfection; but no one was to outshine the others, unless in their own individual belief. Lastly, the famous "Pas de Quatre" was composed with all the art of which the distinguished ballet-master, Perrot, was *capable*. All was at length adjusted. Satisfaction was in every

mind; the "Pas de Quatre" was rehearsed—was announced; the very morning of the event had arrived, no further hindrances were expected. Suddenly, while I was engaged with the lawyers in my own room, poor Perrot rushed unannounced into my presence in a state of intense despair. He uttered frantic exclamations, tore his hair, and at last found breath to say all was over, that the "Pas de Quatre" had fallen to the ground, and could never be given. With difficulty the unfortunate ballet-master was calmed down to a sufficient state of reason to be able to explain the cause of his anguish. When all was ready, I had desired Perrot to regulate the order in which the separate *pas* of each *danseuse* should come. The place of honour, the *last* in such cases, as in regal processions, had been ceded without over-much hesitation to Mademoiselle Taglioni. Of the remaining ladies who claimed equal rights, founded on talent and popularity, neither would appear before the others. "Mon Dieu!" exclaimed the ballet-master, "Cerito will not begin before Carlotta—nor Carlotta before Cerito—there is no way to make them stir—all is finished!" "The solution is easy," said I; "let the *oldest* take her unquestionable right to the envied position." The ballet-master smote his forehead, smiled assent, and bounded from the room upon the stage. The judgment of the manager was announced. The ladies tittered, laughed, drew back, and were now as much disinclined to accept the right of position as they had been before eager to claim it. The order of the ladies being settled, the "Grand Pas de Quatre" was finally performed on the same night before a delighted audience, who little knew how nearly they had been deprived of their promised treat.

The excitement out of doors was, as may be anticipated, immense; the house was crowded to suffocation on every night; it was everywhere the one absorbing topic of conversation from the palace to the shop-counter. The excitement crossed the Channel, foreign newspapers teemed with histories of its wonders. Foreign courts received with official despatches accounts of its captivations. 'It was literally a European event.' The wonderful 'Pas' was revived in 1847 with Rosati, a new luminary, and the last of the great *danseuses*, in place of Lucille Grahn, the other three being as before. 'Les Quatre Saisons,' in 1848, with Carlotta Grisi, Cerito, Marie Taglioni, Rosati, Perrot, and St. Léon was received with almost equal enthusiasm. But already the tide was turning. The first symptoms of the decline of the ballet may be traced to the appearance of Jenny Lind, from the rise of that frantic *furor* which admitted no rivalry. Music began to claim that supremacy over the sister art, which has resulted in the extinction

of the latter. Languid swells began to be bored with trying to understand the story of those poetic and elaborate entertainments, and cared only for the detached dances. One of the last, if not *the* last of the great ballets, was 'Le Corsaire,' which the writer had the privilege of seeing, and which he holds amongst his most cherished operatic memories. Rosati was the Medora, Ronzani the Conrad. The last scene, in which the Corsair's vessel—it was so large that a ballet was performed upon the deck—was wrecked and literally engulfed before the spectators' eyes, was the town talk, and far surpassed any scenic effect of the kind I have ever witnessed. But in spite of the splendour of the production, upon which an immense sum was expended, it was a failure. Nothing like it has been seen since. Gradually the ballet became of less and less importance, until it sank into a *divertissement*, and finally disappeared as a separate entertainment. Its only representative now is such dances as 'La Tyrolienne,' which, as has been before shown, composers were obliged to introduce into all their works in the days when dancing was esteemed.

We cannot but regret the disappearance of an art upon which so much talent, skill, and labour were expended to render it perfect. I am inclined to date the decline of the poetical school of dancing to the appearance of the celebrated Spanish *danseuse* Perea Nena; she substituted rapid steps for the graceful floating movements and statuesque poses of the Taglioni school; but then, what resistless fascination, what *abandon*, what grace, what a delirious excitement, there was in her every motion, what a marvel of execution in those flashing feet whose movements were at times too rapid to be caught by the eye! But immediately up sprang a host of imitators; one or two contrived to reproduce something of the mechanical skill of the original; these in their turn had their imitators, who have degenerated into the vulgar contortionists now yelet dancers. A *danseuse* of the old school, Mdlle. Dore, appeared a few years ago at Covent Garden, in 'Babil and Bijou,' but her graceful repose was 'caviare to the general,' who prefer gymnastic exhibitions. If the drapery be scanty, the movements may be as uncouth as you please. These strictures do not apply to those ladies who appear in the opera-divertissements, and who, if they cannot pretend to the brilliancy of their predecessors, endeavour to preserve something of the old refinement.

The Witch of Garrowbuie.

‘MAMMY, why but you licht the fire?’

A little fretful voice issued from the bed built into the wall, in Widow Carland’s kitchen, and Matty, its small owner, raised herself on her elbow, and peered out into the room where her mother was bustling about.

There was no sign of breakfast yet, although it was long past the time for that meal in the hard-working household; and Matty’s eldest brother, who managed the farm, had not gone out as usual. The other children were still asleep.

‘Why but you licht the fire?’ repeated the child.

‘Whisht, whisht, for any sake, an’ dinna wake the weans,’ replied her mother mysteriously. ‘It’s May morn, an’ I’ll mak’ nae reek in this chimney for a gude wee while any way.’

‘Why no, mother?’

‘Do ye ax me why, when Kitty Ryan, the witch-woman, is living convenient? I’ll hold you she’s at her shamefu’ wark this May morning,’ replied Mrs. Carland sharply.

Matty, much puzzled, kept silence, afraid to say more, and meditated upon her mother’s mysterious answer, which we must explain, not to keep the reader in like suspense.

The townland of Garrowbuie was situated upon a fertile, swelling hill that was almost an island, for it was washed on three sides by the clear waters of Mulroy, and was united to the mainland by a neck of marshy ground, affording a very narrow causeway at high tide.

Garrowbuie consisted of three good farms—the largest belonging to Mrs. Carland; the best to Joseph Wallace, an old bachelor; and a third to a man named Henderson.

These three farm-houses had each one or two small cabins adjoining it, inhabited by cottiers or day labourers.

There was a glorious view from the Carlands’ door at the brow of the hill. Looking down upon the lake studded with green islands, where sheep and cattle grazed, the eye sought the towering heather-crowned mountains at either side of Mulroy, and between the breaks in their rugged summits caught glimpses of the far-off Atlantic, like a blue ribbon laid against the paler tint of the sky.

Carland, Wallace, and Henderson grew some flax and oats; but the greater portion of each farm was kept in grazing-ground.

The cows thereon were sleek and handsome, and all looked like excellent milkers; but this fair promise was often delusive after Kitty Ryan, the witch-woman, came to settle in the neighbourhood.

Kitty's husband worked for Joseph Wallace, and his cow grazed with his master's cattle in the home park.

For some time after the Ryans came to Garrowbuie they did not attract much attention; but by degrees people observed that the wife paid many visits to the shop in Tamney, carrying a large basket, which she carefully covered with her shawl if any neighbour chanced to meet her.

At the same time the churnings at the farm-houses dwindled away, and Kitty was to be seen entering the different kitchens during that important operation, either under pretence of asking for a coal for her fire or to borrow some article or other; and it was remarked that she never, by any accident, used the formula in vogue on these occasions, viz., 'God bless your churn,' or 'God give you the good o' your milk and butter.'

Now, it is well known all over Ulster that a right-minded person who chanced to enter a house where churning is going on will always bless the churn; therefore it will not be wondered at that Kitty's silence began to excite suspicion and remark in Garrowbuie.

'How many cows has Ryan?' asked Mrs. Kerr, the owner of the shop in Tamney, of Widow Carland, not long after the arrival of this dangerous neighbour.

'Just ane—a wee brown Moiley that grazes wi' Joseph Wallace's.'

'That beats all,' replied the shopkeeper; 'she brings me a big basket full o' half-pounds o' butter twice a week: where does she get it?'

Nobody could answer this question satisfactorily, but a combination was entered into by the dwellers on Garrowbuie thereupon.

The doors were shut at churning-time, and no more coals were given out.

But panic reigned throughout the townland. The different herdboys had seen on three occasions a large hare run in and out among the cows, backwards and forwards, under and around them, and on trying to hit her with stones they had suddenly lost sight of her.

'Ye maun charge the gun wi' a saxpence or a threepenny bit,' said the old people, 'an' then ye'll have her safe; it's only silver can kill thae witch hares.'

While the talk of the people was at its height, one of the

young Carlands came in from the grazing-ground one evening, declaring that he had seen the hare make off to the ditch behind Ryan's cottage, and creep into a hole in the wall of his house.

Meanwhile May-day approached. It is well known that all witches and warlocks make a compact with Satan on that day to last throughout the year: certain ceremonies have to be gone through which give them power over their neighbours' cows.

Kitty Ryan was up betimes; not even her husband was to know what took her out into the balmy May air so early: her errand was not one to be confided to any mortal ear.

Providing herself with a rope fabricated out of hairs stolen from the cows' tails, on every inch of which her fingers had tied a knot, she ran swiftly along the mearing, or boundary between Henderson's and Wallace's grazing-fields, dragging her rope over the grass wet with May dew, and chanting in a low tone the words:

From a' the reeks that I see,
Milk an' butter, come to me.

No smoke rose from Mrs. Carland's chimney, to be sure, but from Wallace's and Henderson's the thin blue drifts floated against a background of beech and sycamore plantation, which was covered by a delicate mantle of tenderest green. The cottier chimneys also gave forth their smoke.

The dangerous hour was over, and Mrs. Carland lit her fire, and with hungry children sat down to her long-delayed breakfast.

'Gie us a threepenny bit, mother, an' Joseph Wallace 'ill shoot thon hare the next time we see her,' said little Jack.

While he was speaking, Joseph Wallace entered the house and sat down silently. He looked grave, and was very pale.

'Save us, Joe, man!' cried Mrs. Carland, 'what is it ails ye?'

'I'm all through other, Nancy,' replied the farmer faintly; 'I gie you my word you might knock me down wi' a straw.'

'What is it?' said the widow, trembling.

'I was out bye early,' began Wallace, 'an' as I was crossing owre the wee brig across the burn between Frank Henderson's meadow an' we'er ain home park, I seen Kitty Ryan standing in the burn, an' a rope in her hand trailing on the water, an' spouts o' water was rising up like clouds over her.'

'Save us!' from Mrs. Carland and her eldest son.

'Ay, Nancy, it's nae lie I'm telling you. I seen her as plain as I see you now. It was gey an' like the rope I picked up last Hallowe'en in the Fairy Glen.'

'What was that, Joseph, dear? for I never heered tell o't.'

'Mother an' me kept it quiet, Nancy,' replied the farmer,

wrinkling his long, hard visage into a hundred lines. 'I was riding home frae Kindrum afther the moon was up, an' I seen a black thing lying on the grass at the side o' the road. I got down an' lifted it, an' brung it home before me on the horse. It was a hair rope wi' a knot on ilka inch o't, an' I just threw it down in the corner o' the house.'

'Weel, Joe?' from his breathless auditress.

'Weel, Nancy, my mother was churning the next morning, an' she called out that the churn was beginning to leak, so I took the rope because it lay handy, an' sweeled it round the churn till I could get the cooper. The staff wad hardly move, an' the butter kept coming—meskins an' meskins—more nor I ever seen on a Christian's churn before.'

'"Tak' thon rope back, an' leave it where you got it, Joe," says mother, "for it's no canny," says she; so I took her bidding, an' the next time she churned we'd we'er usual quantity o' butter, which was but small at that time. Now, Nancy, maybe that was Kitty's rope.'

'God be between us an' her!' ejaculated Mrs. Carland piously.

'But I hanna' finished my story yet,' continued the farmer. 'When I seen Kitty at her pranks this May morning, I called out loud for her to hear—

From a' the reeks that I see,
Milk an' butter, come to me;

an' before the words was well out o' my mouth, I was all spattered over wi' milk. There, you may see the stains o't yet on my coat.'

This marvellous recital filled the whole party with intense dismay. That Wallace had real cause for his terror was soon shown, for from that day forth his cows became worthless. He churned and churned, and nothing but froth appeared.

His old mother, who had worked zealously for him all his life, became very ill with vexation, and was laid upon what seemed her deathbed.

Summer waned. Garrowbuie had been green with flax and corn, and then golden with ripened grain, and the stooks were carried home, and comfortable stackyards clustered round the farm-houses. Great flocks of geese and turkeys fattened on the stubble fields, and the brown leaves dropped off the beech and sycamore plantation.

The hare had not been shot with a silver bit, but still ran in and out among Joe Wallace's cows, and was still seen to make her way to the hole in the wall of Ryan's house.

Kitty still sold great quantities of butter in Tamney and Milford, and her neighbours now and then complained of scanty churnings: the affair caused more than a nine days' wonder.

Various pieces of advice were given to Joseph Wallace, who was apparently pursued by the witch's unflagging enmity. His Roman Catholic neighbours advised him to apply to the priest, and the Protestants exhorted him to visit a wise man reputed to possess a charm capable of curing elf-shot cattle.

Joe hearkened to these last, and at length repaired to the wise man's dwelling. The interview was private, but he returned hopeful.

He was to churn next morning, and his mother, from her bed in the corner of the kitchen, saw him make unusual preparations.

He brought the chair near a roaring fire, wherein he placed the coulter of the plough; he next locked the door and fastened the window-shutters, so that no chink or crevice was left open, and then he began to churn with might and main.

'Why do you put the coulter in the fire, Joe?' asked the old woman.

'Because that'll bring the one that did the mischief crying to the door,' replied her son grimly; 'she'll burn as the coulter heats in the fire.'

So saying, he took off his coat, and churned more vigorously than ever, the perspiration standing in beads upon his long face, and his lips compressed to an expression of severe earnestness. For was he not acting a patriotic part in ridding Garrowbuie of the witch? Would not all the inhabitants of the townland have cause to thank him for that morning's work?

So the butter came in immense quantities, reminding him of the day he tied the hair-rope round the churn.

Presently the iron coulter in the fire began to glow, and there came hurried footsteps to the door, and some one lifted the latch, trying to get in. 'I want the loan o' a coal: my fire's out,' said a voice, which the mother and son recognised despite its trembling.

No reply.

'Be pleased to let me in,' pleaded the voice, waxing more and more agitated.

Still no notice of the supplicant, and the farmer churned on industriously.

Again came the cry, 'Open the door, Joseph Wallace, for the love o' God!'

This time the entreaty sounded like a shriek of agony.

'Na, Kitty Ryan, you'll no' get in here,' said the farmer sternly.

'My heart's roasting! If you felt the burning pain I feel!' screamed Kitty, shaking the door with all her remaining strength.

'Let her in, Joe, dear,' said the old woman from her bed; 'she'll die at the door. For God's sake, let her in, or I'll hae to creep out an' do't mysel'.'

'I'm dying—you'll be too late,' moaned the witch, now very feebly.

'Dinna leave her death on yer sowl, though she is a witch,' entreated the mother; and Joe, very unwillingly, gave heed to her prayer and unlocked the door.

Thereupon Kitty staggered in, her features drawn with pain, every limb trembling, and her hands pressed convulsively upon her heart.

She glanced shudderingly at the red-hot coulter, and motioned that it should be taken out of the fire. This was done, and while it lay cooling on the clay floor Wallace forced her to confess her evil deeds—a full confession—and, bringing out the Bible, obliged her to swear upon it that never again would she molest her neighbours at Garrowbuie—never more practise the art of witchcraft.

She kept her oath. The young Carlands ceased to see the fat hare among the cows, and the housewives no longer complained of empty milkpails or of bad churnings. Her own gains waxed small: instead of baskets filled with butter, she merely carried to Mrs. Kerr each week a small quantity, such as her single cow might naturally be supposed to supply.

The terror with which she had inspired her neighbours, however, long remained, and a little gain continued to accrue to her therefrom; for when her cow was near the calving, and milk consequently very scarce in her cabin, one and another of the dwellers on Garrowbuie might have been seen carrying her a small tin of cream for her tea, or a tiny print of butter.

If asked by a stranger why they did so, the answer was always the same, 'It's best to be friendly wi' Kitty Ryan.'

So her uncanny reputation remained to her. Joseph Wallace and the wise man, clever though they thought themselves, had not bereft her of *all*.



UNDER THE CHESTNUT.

Under the Chestnut.

UNDER the chestnut we used to meet ;
 I often fancy I hear her feet
 Tripping along through the rustling grass—
 Each morn through the meadow she used to pass—
 And close to the fence would she linger with me,
 Under the leaves of our chestnut tree.

Ah !—we were happy. Old age and care
 Had not marred my brow or whitened my hair ;
 We vowed to be true for ever and aye,
 As we plighted our troth one fair May day ;
 And little we dreamed of the trouble to be,
 Under the shade of our chestnut tree.

But misfortune came. A scandalous word
 Broke the pure heart of my gentle bird ;
 'Twas a cruel lie, but, like a knife
 In assassin's hand, it struck at her life ;
 And never again her fair form might I see
 Under the boughs of our chestnut tree.

I went abroad.—In the race for gold,
 My hand grew hard and my heart grew cold.
 But I cannot forget ; and although I know
 That my love's asleep where the yew trees grow,
 I often in dreams see her smiling on me
 Through the white blooms of our chestnut tree.

Ivan Turgenieff.

Russian literature displays more prominently than the literature of any other country the impress of the *milieu* in which it has been developed. Like Russian civilisation, it is essentially an exotic, and, like an exotic transplanted into a favourable soil, it has sprouted forth with a rapidity and exuberance almost without parallel in the annals of the literary world. Though scarcely more than a century old, it has already passed through the most distinct phases, from the antique classical ode to the modern *feuilleton* and newspaper article. In the following pages it will be outside our purpose to trace, however briefly, the history of these phases, which may be roughly classified into three periods—the Præ-Classic, the Classic, and the Romantic. In order, however, to show the connection of the subject of our study with Russian literature in general, we shall indicate some of the chief characteristics of these various periods.

The beginnings of Russian literature coincide with the foundation of the Empire; previously to that epoch, we find only folklore and ballads handed down to posterity by word of mouth. Under Peter the Great, artistic poetry appeared in the shape of direct imitations of foreign models. Like the civilisation and art of the country, literature was imported, and, like that civilisation and art, it took its cue from the prevailing fashion of the Court, and became at different times French, German, classical or romantic, but never national. The critic Belinski, whom his countrymen delight to call the Russian Lessing, sums up the history and character of the literature in the following words: ‘Russian literature is not a native production, but an exotic growth transplanted from a foreign soil. Its whole history consists of continual struggles to break loose from the results of this transplantation, and to take root in the national soil.’

It is a significant fact that the first Russian poet, Prince Kantemir, was a Greek (1708–44), and that the literature began with satire, Kantemir’s models being Horace’s Juvenal and Boileau. From Kantemir to Schukovski (1783–1852), we have the activity of the præ-classic and classical schools, and the beginnings of comedy and the novel, in which domains the Russians most excel. With Schukovski, who was more a translator than an original writer, we get the beginnings of the romantic school under the influence of Schiller, Goethe, Uhland, and Byron. The

first really great name in Russian literature is Pushkin, who was obviously so far above any of his predecessors or contemporaries that he met with honours out of all proportion to his merits, and his premature death in a duel at the early age of thirty-eight was regarded as a national calamity. Pushkin's work, however, like his life, is irregular and fragmentary. He lacks the strength and patience required for a great work of art, and the numbers of formless and incomplete poems which he has left behind him are a striking example of that incapacity to carry out any great work of art which seems to be inherent in the Slave nature, and of which Slave literature will furnish numerous instances. Pushkin's best work is the novel 'The Captain's Daughter,' a work excellent in every way, and worthy to rank amongst the masterpieces of fiction.

The next reaction was against Romanticism, and was initiated by Nicholas Gogol (1808-52). Gogol, like Dickens, set the example of choosing his subjects from real life, and delineating men and things with realistic minuteness, apart from all æsthetic considerations. As a novelist and dramatist, Gogol has shown himself a fine and acute observer, quick in seizing the ridiculous side of life, and bold in exposing it, but rather too prone to sink into buffoonery and farce. Above all, he is a satirist, pitiless in the handling of his only weapon—irony. Mérimée, whose judgment in these matters is worthy of all respect, has expressed his opinion that Gogol only wanted the medium of a more widely-known language to obtain a reputation equal to that of the greatest English humourists. Furthermore, the writings of Gogol are amongst the few works of real Russian blood which we can mention. Amongst these are Kryloff's 'Fables,' Pushkin's novel of 'The Captain's Daughter,' and especially the songs and poems of Kobzoff, the Russian Burns. But as a rule, Russian literature does not bear the impress of Russian life, nor does it occupy itself with the life of the people—a fact which will not appear strange when it is remembered that, setting aside one or two names, Russian literature emanates from the nobles. The two chief exceptions are Kobzoff, who was a shepherd on the steppe, and Gogol. In talent and culture these two writers fall far behind the aristocrats, but in freshness, vigour, and intimacy of feeling, they are far beyond them. Up to the present, then, we have found in the two fields of comedy and fiction, in which the Russian genius seems most fitted to excel, two names which stand alone—Pushkin and Gogol.

From the above brief statement of the results of a century's intellectual effort, the reader will perhaps at first thoughts con-

ceive no very ardent desire to form a deeper acquaintance with Russian literature, and will perhaps be only too ready to acquiesce in the complaint of the Slavophil leader Khomakoff, who taunted his countrymen with their lack of originality by reminding them of the fact that they had never invented so much as a mouse-trap. These results are nevertheless remarkable in their way, and strikingly illustrative of the Slave character. It must be remembered that the first Russian grammar dates only from the middle of the eighteenth century, and that the laws of Russian verse were not fixed till about the same period, both achievements being due to Lomonoff, philologist, mathematician, naturalist, and poet, who inaugurated the classical period of literature. Again, it is an important physiological fact that, so long as the human mind is compelled to strain to the full the receptive faculties, it is unable to engage in creative activity. The same law applies to the collective intelligence of a nation; so long as it is occupied in receiving and assimilating a flood of new ideas, it will not produce anything original. This is exactly the case with Russian literature. With a natural pliancy of mind, and a naturally powerful imitative faculty, which is exemplified, amongst other things, in the facility with which they acquire foreign languages, the Russians became imitators and plagiarists, and produced successful imitations of all kinds and forms of poetical composition, and thereby gained a great command over their own language—a language which is praised on all hands as being one of the richest and most picturesque of European idioms, combining the force and depth of the German with the exquisite music and beauty of form of the Latin languages. At the present moment, then, as far as ideas and form are concerned, Russian literature is on a level with the literatures of other European nations; and as far as the language itself is concerned, it possesses excellences which are all its own. As is the case with American literature, the only want is a thoroughly national writer. We shall now see how far Turgenieff is fitted to supply this want.

Ivan Turgenieff has already written enough to enable us to form an adequate judgment of his work and ability. The first questions we ask are: How does he regard objects? Is he an artist, a moralist, or a satirist? To what is his imagination directed? Imaginations differ not only in their nature and energy, but also in their object and domain. Dickens, for instance, possessed a boundless and passionate imagination, which could spread the veil of poetry over the commonest and vulgarest objects of life and nature, but unfortunately, at least from an artistic point of view, he is lost in the minute and impassioned observation of small

things ; and the moral of all his work is—be charitable, and love one another. Now, Turgenieff is essentially an artist. He does not constitute himself a judge of society : he simply paints it as it is, noting its foibles, caprices, and passions with the eye of a subtle and practised observer ; and although, as we shall see later on, the number of themes at his disposal is somewhat limited, and his manner of developing them imperfect from the point of view of artistic fiction, yet we have no hesitation in saying that he takes a more general, impartial, and intelligent view of life than any novelist we know. He is essentially a disciple of culture, whose appreciation of what is good and true is universal, but not immoderate or unregulated. Every class of society and every type of humanity—religious fanatics, half-witted persons, and idiots—all find an acute and sympathetic interpreter in Turgenieff. There are, indeed, few novelists, save and except George Eliot, who are interested by so many and diverse things in life as Turgenieff, but it is always as an observer and analyst. His aim always seems to be to find a subject morally interesting, but in so doing he betrays an almost entire lack of inventiveness. Most of his tales are merely sketches *sur le vif* ; there is no plot, *péripétie* or *dénouement*. You ask in vain for that poetic justice which every novel-reader naturally looks for, but the author tells you frankly that his knowledge of the people ends where he left them ; and as for what became of them, he can tell you absolutely nothing. It will hence be seen that Turgenieff's writings do not fall under the heading of novels in the strict sense of the term. A novel has two conditions : first of all, it must, like a drama, follow out and develop a regular plot or course of action ; and secondly, the heroes must not remain fixed and unchanged, but their characters must develop themselves objectively before us in their actions and words. Now, none of Turgenieff's works hitherto fulfil these conditions. A progressive and organised plot seems to be either beyond his powers or outside his purpose. In place of it we find a more or less loosely connected series of sketches and situations ; his characters are for the most part passive, and occupy the position of objects rather than of subjects. The tale of 'Liza ; or, a Nest of Nobles,' is a good instance of the difficulty Turgenieff finds in composing a long novel, and of how many episodes and subordinate matters he has to resort to apparently in order to fill his volume. The story begins in the middle, then breaks off suddenly, and goes back in order to give the history of the father, the grandfather, and the great-grandfather of the hero Lavretsky. Again, to take another instance, 'The Jew' is simply an animated but isolated sketch of an incident in the Russian camp in 1852, containing the materials

of a plot of which no use has been made. Even in the most ambitious and developed of Turgenieff's works—'Liza,' 'Fathers and Sons,' and 'Smoke'—there is no regularly developed plot, and they are consequently nothing but highly elaborated sketches.

Having said so much in dispraise of the author's casual and indolent manner of working, so far as the mere mechanism of a plot is concerned, we must hasten to counterbalance the disparagement by an equally strong eulogy. Turgenieff has written nothing absolutely worthless. In his most unimportant and unpretending works there are as many rich thoughts and as many poetical beauties as would make the fortune of a dozen second-rate scribblers. He can raise a smile or draw a tear, he can stir our hearts and enchain our attention as it were with a spell. In every sketch we meet new and original characters, whom we see at once to be real men and not mere shadows. Again, his tales are extraordinarily rich in subordinate figures, yet every single person, whether hero or subordinate, is in itself, and compared with the others, an original; even though, as is often the case, it appears as the representative of an idea already several times treated and as a mere variation of a stock theme. At first sight we may be tempted to believe that our author repeats himself, but he is too clever and sharp an analyst for that; his characters are not mere types, and it will be found on examination that, in spite of the similarity of their positions, and the close relationship of their natures, there still exists the greatest dissimilarity between them, and that each is a being of a special and peculiar character. Turgenieff can, as it were, think into each one's soul the angles and points of individuality, and he knows exactly the right words to portray each one's position, temperament, and degree of culture. This wonderful skill in distinguishing the differences which exist in the sameness of humanity is the evidence of Turgenieff's knowledge of the human heart and of his inexhaustible power of psychological analysis—a knowledge and skill which give a tone of vivid definiteness to his work. Like Balzac, Turgenieff is perhaps more of a psychologist than a novelist, but he differs from the author of 'La Comédie Humaine,' inasmuch as Balzac explains human sensations scientifically and almost physically, and substitutes a machine of his own imagination instead of the human heart.

Turgenieff is at once a cosmopolitan and an exclusive writer. In spite of his unmistakable loyalty and love of fatherland, he has always a keen eye for the weaknesses and shortcomings of his countrymen, nor does he spare the lash of his satire and irony in depicting them. This is more particularly the case in his later works, which have caused so much bitterness of feeling in Russia,

but it is equally evident in his earliest book, 'The Stories of a Sportsman.' Turgenieff left his fatherland at an early age, and, after spending several years in travelling about Europe, he finally settled in Paris, much to the disgust of his compatriots, who accuse him of disloyalty. However this may be, it is remarkable that he says very little to the credit of Russia and Russian society in his books; and although his characters are Russian, the action of the tale as often as not takes place on foreign soil—at Paris, Florence, Baden, or elsewhere, which is perhaps an advantage for the general reader. Nevertheless, Turgenieff is not a popular writer. He is a true friend of humanity, and the knight and paladin of all who are unfortunate or oppressed, but still his works bear above all things the stamp and impress of culture, and it is only by cultivated minds that they can be thoroughly appreciated. His observation is too fine, and his treatment too light and delicate, to be within the *portée* of the general run of mankind; and though we believe that no one can study his works without deriving a large amount of pleasure and intellectual refinement from them, still it must be confessed that Turgenieff will never appeal to the common man like Scott, or Schiller, or even Goethe. But although he must be designated as an exclusive writer, the number of cultivated readers nowadays is large enough to afford an ample and appreciative audience. His works, indeed, have been translated into several European languages, but from some inexplicable caprice of fortune Turgenieff is not so well known in England as his merits deserve.

There remain two points in Turgenieff's work about which a few words may be said, namely, his treatment of character and his descriptive power. In his treatment of character Turgenieff is not only a psychologist but a humourist, but his humour, though sometimes bitter and demonstrative, is generally sympathetic, and, if the term may be so applied, artistic. It is not like the humour of Thackeray, inasmuch as Thackeray was to a great extent a moralist and a lay preacher. Thackeray's humour does not consist mainly in the creation of oddities of manner or habit, but in so representing men, women, and society that the reader shall feel that the follies and vices depicted are a deviation from the ideal society and the ideal humanity always present to the writer's mind. The real society is described vividly with that keen perception of individuality which makes the artist, but in the background there always looms the moral antithesis. No one can be simply amused by Thackeray's writings without at the same time being filled with shame at the defects of humanity. In 'Esmond' we have the ideal which has always been the invisible foil of his other books. In Turgenieff's works the actual state of society absorbs the author's

perceptive powers, and as his purpose is purely artistic and *unmoral*, the reader may either be amused or instructed, according to his inclination or temperament. As an acute and searching observer, Turgenieff is naturally a realist in his descriptions. Sometimes he is quaint and almost vulgar in his comparisons; for instance, he compares a gentleman's nose to a potato, and again, speaking of the shortcomings of his countrymen, he says that if ten Russians meet they are sure to begin to talk about Russia. 'They squeeze, suck, and chew this unfortunate subject like boys do india-rubber, and with the same result.' As the result of his observations in another field, Turgenieff says that 'up to the present I have never had the pleasure of meeting a Russian gentleman who did not sing out of tune.' As a rule, however, Turgenieff's descriptions are vividly realistic, but not overdone, nor without a tinge of poetry. Take, for instance, the following interior scene from 'Liza,' where Marfa Timofeevna is consoling her niece and kissing her hands: 'Liza bent forward and reddened; but she did not let her aunt rise, nor did she withdraw her hands. She felt she had no right to withdraw them; no right to prevent the old lady from expressing her sorrow and sympathy. And Marfa Timofeevna could not sufficiently kiss those poor pale nerveless hands, while silent tears poured down from her eyes and from Liza's too. Meanwhile the cat Matros sat purring in the easy chair by the side of the stocking and the ball of worsted; the long thin flame of the little lamp feebly flickered in front of the Icon, and in the next room, just on the other side of the door, stood Nastasia Carpovna, and furtively wiped her eyes with a check pocket-handkerchief rolled up into a sort of a ball.'

Earnestly recommending all who delight in refined fiction to the works of Turgenieff, and assuring them that the perusal of them will not be lost time, we shall content ourselves with a brief notice of three of his most complete and elaborate works—'Liza,' 'Fathers and Sons,' and 'Smoke.' 'Liza; or, A Nest of Nobles,' was written in 1842. Of some of the faults of construction we have already spoken, but of the story as a whole we may say that it is interesting in itself, and that the numerous studies of character which it contains are altogether admirable. In spite of its somewhat *découssé* plan, there is a high level of style and thought kept up throughout the story. The serious parts are related in a quiet, dignified, and incisive manner, the lighter with that delicate humour which characterises all Turgenieff's work. Lavretsky, the hero of the story, has made an unfortunate marriage in his youth, in consequence of which he is separated from his wife Varvara Pavlovna, who leads a fashionable Bohemian and not altogether reputable

life in France and Italy in the company of artists and pianists. Lavretsky, after the incident in Paris which led to the separation, returns home to an estate near the town of O—, where he makes the acquaintance of a young relative Lisavetha, with whom he soon becomes on terms of intimate and confidential friendship, and finally falls in love with her. While he is struggling with his passion, he sees by chance a paragraph in a French newspaper announcing the death of his wife; and as he now thinks himself free—marriage in Russia being only dissolved by death—he declares his love to Liza, and finds it returned. A few days only after his declaration the news proves to be false, the frail Varvara returns with her child, Liza goes into a convent, and Lavretsky seeks consolation in solitude. This mere skeleton of the story is sufficient to create the expectation of intensely dramatic and powerful scenes—an expectation which will not be disappointed by the story itself. In ‘Liza’ we have Turgenieff at his best on a favourite subject, namely, the analysis of woman. It is a noticeable fact that, in the whole range of modern art and literature, woman occupies the foreground. Turgenieff’s works form no exception to this rule. In most of his tales women occupy the chief place, and in painting them he exhausts all his skill and knowledge. He is not sensual in the same way as his French predecessors and contemporaries, but still with a full consciousness of his purpose he represents women as they are, with all the traits of their peculiar temperament, whether deep and loving, or clever and selfish. He paints womanly beauty with the eye and feeling of a connoisseur, but like a connoisseur he cares more for what is uncommon than for what is ordinary, however charming it may be. Simple womanhood and simple beauty do not appeal to him with the same fascination as those complex and indefinite Cleopatra-like temperaments which unite physical beauty with the nature of a cat or a serpent. This gipsy type reappears in several of his books, and in the story of ‘Liza’ it is represented by the character of Varvara Pavlovna. In contrast with this brilliant and frail intriguer we have the sweet and angelic character of Liza, puzzled by the conflict between her natural inclinations and her religious feelings, and overpowered with the conviction that happiness does not depend upon ourselves; and then again there is the old aunt Maria Timofeevna, with her sharp practical common sense and her gossiping tongue. Amongst the male characters the chief are the hero Lavretsky, Panshine, and Lemm the old Saxon musician, gray-headed, talented, and sentimental, all three of whom are in love with Liza, and whose various passions are described and analysed with a skill and finesse which cannot be too much studied and

admired. It is hopeless to endeavour to give any idea of the charm and power of 'Liza' by quoting isolated passages; but as an example of the light and incisive touch with which Turgenieff hits off a trivial character in trivial points we cannot find a better instance than his description of Wladimir Panshine. He is a young man invested with a sort of special post in the Ministry of the Interior, and the son of a scheming old spendthrift cavalry officer who spent his life in card-playing with nobles and intriguing to get his son Wladimir a start in the world. At fifteen Wladimir was as polyglot as most of his compatriots, and knew how to enter a drawing-room without nervousness, to make himself agreeable, and to withdraw exactly at the right time. At the University this young hopeful makes an increased circle of desirable acquaintances, thanks to his power of making himself agreeable wherever he goes. 'People were always delighted to see him, for he was fairly good-looking, easy in his manner, amusing, healthy, and ready for everything. Where it was necessary, he was obsequious; where he could be so, he was overbearing—an excellent companion, a *charmant garçon*. Panshine soon fathomed the secret of worldly wisdom; he became imbued with a genuine respect for its laws, learnt with half-contemptuous importance to interest himself about trifles, and to appear as if he considered everything serious as a trifle—he danced admirably, and dressed in the English fashion. Panshine soon gained the reputation of being one of the most amiable and adroit young men in St. Petersburg.'

'Fathers and Sons' was the occasion of a tempest of criticism in Russia. The book, which appeared in 1861, is directed against the Nihilism and Materialism which Young Russia embraced so eagerly under the influence of German physical science. From a formal point of view, it is the most complete of Turgenieff's novels. The narrative runs on smoothly and uninterruptedly, and everything comes out clearly without the aid of long and awkward episodes. It is a faithful and unexaggerated sketch of a certain 'Culturepoche,' as the Germans have it, and the contrast between the old and new eras is drawn out in a sufficiently amusing manner by means of representative types of the old and new schools, Young Russia of the most advanced stage being represented in the person of the positive Bazarof, a young doctor who swears by Büchner, and regards everything from a materialist standpoint. Russia still, it appears, borrows its ideas and fashions from the West, its philosophy from Germany, and its ribbons from France. In this book, also, though to a less extent than elsewhere, the failings and limitations of Turgenieff are visible. We have

pictures of various types of culture united only by an external bond. These are liberalising State officials, aristocrats of the old school, emancipated women, and young apostles of progress, who come forward in their turn, say what they have to say, and vanish, leaving no trace behind them, and standing in no actual relation to the heroes of the book. This may be the case in real life, but there is just the same difference between a picture of life as it is, and an artistic novel, as there is between a panorama and a picture by Turner or Velasquez, and in the interests of art it is necessary to protest.

'Smoke; or, Life at Baden-Baden' (1867), is a description of the life of a collection of Russians in this world's bazaar, through which there runs a thread of a story. The novel, however, is almost entirely polemical, and for non-Russian readers it is apt sometimes to become wearisome; but the sketches of character are exceedingly clever and amusing, and the dialogue, with which the greater part of the book is taken up, is brilliant and real. If we skip the part bearing on matters of purely Russian interest, we shall get a residue of sketches of men and manners which show Turgenieff at his best.

We have chosen the three tales above-mentioned for a separate criticism, because they are the longest and most complete of Turgenieff's works which have yet appeared, and because they illustrate his excellences and his failings better perhaps than the numerous shorter tales which we have not noticed, but which charm us equally or even more than the longer and more ambitious efforts. Such tales as 'Helen,' 'The Tales of a Sportsman,' 'Annouchka,' 'The Brigadier,' 'A King Lear of the Steppe,' and 'A Gentleman of the Steppe,' are compositions which one reads and remembers, and to which one returns with renewed pleasure and profit, and which show Turgenieff's power in many lights which we have not mentioned, and particularly in his descriptions of nature and his observation of animal life. At present, however, the works of Turgenieff are not easily accessible to English readers, though most if not all of them have been translated into French and German, and many of them into English; still, a complete English translation is a desideratum which we hope to see soon supplied.

His latest work, 'Nov; or, Virgin Soil,' has just been made accessible to non-Russian readers by means of a thoroughly excellent German and an almost equally satisfactory French translation. Like 'Fathers and Sons,' the story is entirely Russian, and the thread of the plot, which is very slight, though much more united and continuous than in any of Turgenieff's previous works, is worked into a groundwork of a Socialistic and Nihilistic conspiracy, which

is never, however, brought to a head. The hero of the story, Nédjanof, is the illegitimate son of a nobleman, whose family pay the young man a small annuity. While a student at St. Petersburg, Nédjanof becomes a member of a semi-secret Nihilist Revolutionary society. By a lucky chance one day he gets an appointment as tutor in the family of Sipiaguine, one of those refined, half-enlightened, intriguing gentlemen whom Russia owes to the influence of French culture brought into contact with bureaucratic ambition. Another dependent member of this family is Marianne, who is constantly being reminded of her position by Madame Sipiaguine, one of Turgenieff's favourite womanly types—cold, passionless, serpent-like, but still a slave to the *convenances de société*. Marianne falls in love with Nédjanof, and thoroughly enters into and sympathises with his ideas and plans for the regeneration of society. Unfortunately, however, Nédjanof does not believe in them himself. He writes poetry in secret, and he is always accusing himself of his miserable æsthetic tendencies. With marvellous analytical skill, Turgenieff traces the growing conflict in the young man's mind between belief and unbelief; the painful process of *désillusionnement* by which he finds he has nothing in common with brutal brandy-drinking workmen; the sad but half-comic efforts which he makes at propagandism; and the awful state of despair and anxious disquietude with which the young man's mind is filled by the open-hearted and unhesitating belief which Marianne has in the work to which he himself has converted her.

Tout cela serait bien risible
Si ce n'était pas si triste. . . .

Finally, a too fine sensibility, and a highly nervous and impressionable nature, force Nédjanof to throw up the contest; and this æsthetic democrat—this friend of the people, whose stomach is turned by the mere smell of vodka—puts an end to his life in a fit of despair. The scene in which Turgenieff describes the suicide and death of Nédjanof, who expires almost with the words of his favourite poet Pushkin on his lips, is one of the finest and cleverest things he has written. As regards the subordinate characters of the book, it need only be said that they are drawn in with the exquisite finish and originality which characterise Turgenieff. The droll little sketch of the quaint old couple Fomouchka and Fimouchka is particularly noticeable for the marvellous lightness and *netteté* of execution in which Turgenieff's only rival is Alphonse Daudet, whose little story, called 'Les Vieux,' forms an admirable pendant and contrast to the above-mentioned scene. Although the all-absorbing topic of the war perhaps caused Turgenieff's last

book to fall rather flat in Russia, yet I hear from a trustworthy source that, owing to the fierce attacks of the Russian press, Turgenieff has declared his firm determination to write no more novels. Let us hope, in the interests of the international reading world, that this determination of the most refined and widely-known of all living European novelists will not be too rigorously carried out.

On the whole, Turgenieff's novels do not inspire us with very strong feelings of respect for Russian civilisation. The men we meet with in his books, unless they are peasants, do nothing or next to nothing; their life is devoted to *fainéantisme* and indolent languor; *ennui* and moral complications and perplexities are their besetting companions. This fact perhaps ought not to surprise us, for Russian society presents some of the most curious phenomena which the development of any nation has ever yet produced. Until lately the serfs were, as Peter the Great called them, beasts clad in the skins of beasts; the nobles were absorbed in the diplomatic and military careers; there was no middle class in which a sphere was offered for the exercise of moral qualities. The result is a state of society to which the saying of Carlyle is to a great extent applicable—that it is better to have been trained to be a good Jesuit than to have lived painfully a bad nothing-at-all. That such a state of affairs should have had an influence on literature was naturally to be expected, and it is a fact that even in the songs of the Russian people there is a decided preference for minor keys, and in Russian poetry, and particularly in fiction, there is an unmistakable inclination for that bias which is known as *Weltschmerz*. This tone of pessimistic dissatisfaction and melancholy, which we find in Byron, Heine, and George Sand, makes itself heard, in a subdued but no less decided manner, in the writings of Russia's greatest novelist—Ivan Turgenieff.

T. E. CHILD.

By Prorp.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER XII.

A CHINESE PRISON.

A MORE willing mind to save his friend than that of Arthur Conway, or a more loyal heart, did not exist in any man; but, if their circumstances had been reversed, it is no discredit to him to say that Pennicuick would have been the better man to conduct the matter now in hand. With the fellow-creatures he had to deal with—which means, as it too often does at home, to contend against—three things were above all things necessary: audacity, unscrupulousness, and a profound belief in the vileness of human nature. In all three of these qualities Conway was wanting. He was brave, and had once been reckless enough, but he had lost much of his 'go' and vigour; though his morality was by no means of a milk-and-water type, he was a man of honour; and he entertained the erroneous idea that there was some sort of good in almost every man. Matters were, therefore, against him as a plenipotentiary about to transact with Chinese officials, but on the other hand he felt that he had a personal well-wisher in Fu-chow. True, this man had betrayed his friend, and was indeed the immediate cause of his misfortune; but this was no reason why he should not make use of him to mitigate the mischief he himself had wrought. He had had his revenge, and might now prove susceptible of other passions. If help lay anywhere, it was to be obtained, Conway thought, through this man's agency; and it was to him—the last man in the world that Pennicuick would have looked to—that his thoughts turned upon leaving his unhappy friend.

At the cell door he found the chief gaoler; a sycophantic smile sat on his evil face, the consequence probably of some recent private conversation with Kushan, and he rubbed his huge hands softly together to express conciliation.

'My friend has been ill-treated,' said Conway coldly.

'They have stretched him a bit, honourable sir, but he will come round with a little hog's lard, which shall be applied immediately. In the meantime, can I oblige you in any way?'

'Yes, in many ways; and you will find it to your advantage—much to your advantage—so to do. In the first place, I must see Fu-chow, the prosecutor in this case, and immediately.'

'Good; there is a small fee——'

'You shall be paid in a lump sum for everything. It is not a question of a tael or two. Do you understand?'

There was no doubt that this gentleman understood. The characteristics of the wolf which had heretofore distinguished him disappeared from his cruel face at once, and were replaced by those of the fox; he looked keen, but in high good-humour, like Reynard when he has a fat turkey slung on his shoulder, and is trotting homewards with the best of appetites.

'There is nothing which is more agreeable to my feelings,' he said, 'than to see everything run smooth with honourable persons in my establishment; when things run otherwise, there is no one to blame but themselves. Mistakes,' added he, with a sudden recollection of his treatment of Pennicuick, 'will sometimes occur in the inferior departments, for the master's eye cannot be everywhere; but that is only to say we are human.'

It is one of the small aggravations of Chinese misrule that almost all officials of any rank are 'literates;' they have gained their position by 'cram' of the philosophic kind, which gives their conversation a touch of the Tartuffe or the Joseph Surface. To hear this half-naked villain excusing himself on the ground of humanity would have been grotesque if it had not been so outrageous.

He placed a whistle to his lips, and blew a long shrill call, which produced the under-gaoler, a facsimile of himself except that he was of a slightly more brutal type, and had less clothes on; he wore nothing, in fact, but a pair of linen drawers reaching to his middle.

'Sheer Singh, take this honourable person to see the commander Fu-chow.'

The answer was delivered so rapidly that Conway could not catch it.

The chief gaoler broke out into a grim smile.

'Sheer Singh thinks the commander had better come to you unless you are in a great hurry.'

'I have no time to lose,' observed Conway.

The chief gaoler nodded, and walked away; but Sheer Singh, with a great key in his hand, stood with his face turned heavenward in serene abstraction, like a fiendish St. Peter.

Conway knew by this time what was meant by this contemplative attitude, and at once produced some pieces of silver, which the other seized on greedily and transferred to his mouth, where they stuck out on one side, like a nut in the cheek of a monkey. It was plain by the look of gratified greed in his small eyes that it was a bigger nut than he had expected, and Conway improved

the occasion by telling him that he should have as much again if his conduct gave satisfaction.

The next moment the gate in the grating was unlocked, and he was ushered into the prison yard. This was full of people all sitting or lying on the bare earth in various stages of despondency. Not one was either walking or standing, for this was the 'poor' ward, every inmate of which had been 'squeezed,' and squeezed in vain, until they had very literally no leg to stand upon. Some had suffered, as Pennicuick had done, from 'the frame of the flowering eyebrow,' so called from its resemblance to a bird of that name which in captivity is tied by a short string to its perch, to and from which it continually flies and returns; others had 'grasped the peach,' a cant term applied to suspension by the armpit; and others had 'stood in the cage,' a place just high enough to stand in with no support save from a slab under the chin, and the tips of the toes. These wretched creatures, bruised and nerveless as they were, gazed with interest at the barbarian stranger, and broke into a low droning chatter as the two passed by. Conway understood now the hesitation of his companion to admit him, for tortures of this kind, though always practised upon prisoners who cannot pay their footing, are in fact illegal. The chief gaoler, on the other hand, did not hold himself responsible for these outrages, though he benefited by them, and perhaps was not displeased that the Englishman should have the opportunity of seeing with his own eyes how unpleasant things might be made for his friend, unless good reasons were advanced for a more tonic treatment. To Conway, as we know, the existence of these horrors was not unknown; but from that very circumstance, since he understood them, or their consequences, at a glance, they filled him with the greater loathing. To leave not a stone standing of such a den of torment, and to sow the spot with gunpowder, became an appreciable aspiration, as he looked shudderingly around him; but the general wretchedness it was out of his power to assuage, and he felt he should be fortunate indeed if even the particular object with which he had come to that hateful place could be attained.

'It was necessary to bring you here,' explained his guide, guessing his thoughts, or some of them, from the expression of his countenance, 'because your business did not, it seems, admit of delay; and to bring the commander into your honourable presence would have taken time, since he has been put to bed.'

'Put to bed? why, it is still early morning.'

'Yes,' grinned the other, 'but Fu-chow was tired.'

They had reached a cell door at the end of the yard, which

his companion now unlatched, and, warning him to stoop his head, made signs that he should enter. Conway did so, and found himself in a similar apartment—except that it was sunk a little lower, and therefore received still less light—to that in which he had just left his friend. An earthenware oil lamp which stood on the floor dispelled the dusk of the cell and showed a bed apparently similar to that occupied by Pennicwick. Its occupant, who was undoubtedly Fu-chow, was lying on his back stiff and rigid as a corpse; nor did the entrance of his two visitors cause him to move a muscle, or breathe a word.

‘We give this gentleman a lamp, you see,’ explained Sheer Singh, with the air of a man apologising for a luxury, ‘because he informs us he is highly connected. His father, so he says, is a mandarin, and personally acquainted with his Excellency Twang-hi; and though we have no proof of this, we are willing to take his honourable word. He gives us also to understand that his fees will be forthcoming, but in the mean time, as we have not seen the colour of his money, he is detained here—in rather close custody—until his friends can be communicated with.’

‘And yet he is not accused of any crime,’ observed Conway.

‘Certainly not,’ answered the other coolly. ‘He has no right here, as you say, at all; and therefore it is all the more necessary that he should pay for his lodging. At present he is quite comfortable, but in an hour or two he will feel the desirability of a change of posture, and begin to wish his friends would discharge his debts.’

By this time Conway perceived that the unfortunate ‘commander,’ as Fu-chow was called, or called himself, was by no means lying at his ease. He was stretched on a level slab of wood through which little boards came up at right angles which confined his neck, wrists, and ankles. Thus pegged down—for they fitted very closely—he was of course unable to move a hair’s breadth, and became conscious of Conway’s presence only when he had reached his bed and stood immediately beside him.

‘I am sorry to see you in so ill a plight, Fu-chow,’ observed he gravely, ‘though indeed you have deserved little pity at my hands.’

‘You catch your fish, and throw away the net,’ said the prisoner, speaking slowly and with difficulty.

‘If you mean I have been ungrateful,’ returned Conway, ‘what shall be said of you, who have eaten your master’s bread and have betrayed him?’

‘He and I are now quits,’ resumed the other sullenly; ‘but as for you, why are you free to come and go? Why are you not lying here, as I am, or being squeezed as he is? Would it not have

been as easy to witness against both of you as against one? Yet for my daughter's sake, and because you were kind to me, I remembered you for good when I remembered him for evil.'

'Well, so far as I am concerned, Fu-chow, I am obliged to you, and I hope to show it. And as for Mr. Pennicueik, since you say that you are quits with him, there is no need for further bitterness on either side. From henceforth let us help one another. What is the sum in which you are indebted to this man for fees?'

'Two taels of silver,' interposed the gaoler laconically. Then, seeing Conway putting his hand into his pocket, he added hastily, 'and half a tael for the extra accommodation.'

'Oh, for the bed! I see. Well, here's the money; so unloose him.'

A few strokes of the huge key knocked out the wedges that confined Fu-chow to his pillowless couch; but though free, it was by no means an easy matter for him to rise. Even that hour or so of excessive constraint had stiffened every joint, and planted an ache in every bone. Yet, but for Conway's interference, he would have been doomed to lie upon that bare board, already become a rack of agony, for days and nights.

'Perhaps, my friend, as I wish to have some private talk with Fu-chow,' observed Conway to the gaoler, 'you will leave us alone together.'

'It is not usual to grant such an indulgence,' answered Sheer Singh with a doubtful air; but the next moment he had left the cell, with a similar swelling in his left cheek to that which had interfered with the lines of beauty in his right. Conway had learnt by this time the one efficacious treatment for all Chinese scruples.

'Well, Fu-chow, you feel better now?'

'Yes, I feel better; but yonder fellow,' pointing to the door which had just closed upon the gaoler, 'will presently feel much worse. All the time I was lying there, I have been thinking of what will fit him best; and it shall be the shirt.'

'The shirt?' exclaimed Conway, wondering that the man should think of clothing his enemy, though indeed he stood much in need of garments.

'Yes, the wire shirt; it fits quite closely, you see; you pull it, and the skin comes through, and then a razor is run over the outside. That shall be Sheer Singh's suit when my father the Mandarin comes to hear of what has been done to his son.'

The expression of Fu-chow's face was absolutely fiendish in its fury: his words, too, were all the more malignant from the tardy and unctuous tone in which they were delivered. Above all, he

had an air of insulted nobility beneath which Conway hardly recognised the prompt attendant, who had served him on board the boat, and showed no sign of pride save in his fancied proficiency in the English tongue. His sense of dignity had been offended by Pennicwick, but it was plain that it had been outraged infinitely more by his treatment at the hand of his fellow-countryman.

‘Look you, because I am poor,’ he continued, wetting his dry lips with his tongue, in a manner very suggestive of a serpent’s flicker, ‘they have dared to treat me in this manner. They do not understand that, though my father has been discontented with my conduct, he has not disowned me. They do not believe a man who wears the three-eyed feather can have a son who is poor.’

‘It is no longer necessary for him to be poor, if he will only be obliging,’ observed Conway with significance. ‘I know one who will give five thousand taels of silver for an act of good service, and yet not think he has paid too much for it.’

‘Five thousand taels!’ repeated Fu-chow slowly. ‘That tastes very nice.’

‘Yes, and you shall have it in your own mouth, Fu-chow, like that scoundrel yonder, if you will accomplish what I am about to ask of you.’

‘I will do anything for you that lies in my power,’ answered Fu-chow simply, ‘and that chop-chop, even without the five thousand taels.’

A childish smile had replaced the scowl upon his pasty face, and Conway felt that he could believe him.

‘Well, my friend’s interests are my interests just now, Fu-chow, and in advancing them you will be obliging me.’

Fu-chow shook his head; the sentiment was too subtle for him; and as for its practical application, that was altogether outside his experience. Conway was compelled to put the case in a more material form.

‘If I were in my friend’s position, you would do your best for me, would you not? Well; do it for him instead of me, and while he pays you with money, I will pay you with thanks from my very heart.’ Conway laid his hands upon that organ. If Pennicwick had been by, he would have said, ‘There is nothing like pantomime for your savages;’ and indeed gesture helped out the halting words.

‘Good master,’ said the Chinaman, but without a touch of softness, ‘all this care of yours is labour in vain. The decree for “Ling-chih” will come to-morrow or next day, as sure as the sun. Not I, nor my father (though he wears the three-eyed feather),

nor Twang-hi, nor the lord of the province, no, nor the Emperor, the Son of Heaven himself, could save this man, since he has committed sacrilege. Though, indeed,' he added, dropping his voice, 'money can do something.'

'That is what I want to come to,' said Conway eagerly. 'What can it do, and how can it be applied?'

'Well, a good sum must be given to the executioner, who will then strike a vital part with the first blow, and kill your friend at once; he will be put out of his misery on the instant instead of being cut to pieces alive. If he had been a warrior, like yourself, his gall-bladder would have been afterwards sold for a charm, for it gives courage; but being what he is, why, that operation will be dispensed with.'

It was plain by the unctuous manner in which he lingered over these details that Pennicuick's impending fate was even yet by no means distressing to him to contemplate, and it was with difficulty that Conway could restrain his disgust. What pained him, however, still more, was the confidence with which Fu-chow spoke of the sentence being carried out, and of the impossibility of its being interfered with. He could not but remember that the Mandarin Twang-hi had expressed himself to the same effect, and almost in the same words. As for the mitigation hinted at, the victim would have a better resource in the bottle of laudanum than in the humanity of the executioner. 'My friend is as brave a man as ever drew breath, Fu-chow,' said he gravely, 'though he does not chance to wear a sword. But life is dearer to us Englishmen than it is held in China. In this country, I know, it is not difficult to buy it if the temptation is great enough. In short' (and here Conway felt the colour rising in his cheek in spite of himself), 'the proposition of my friend is that he should purchase a substitute.'

'The punishment of "Ling-chih" is no ordinary death,' observed the Chinaman immediately.

'Nor would the bribe be an ordinary one,' put in Conway; 'the executioner would of course be fed in the manner you suggested. When I mentioned five thousand taels, that would be your reward alone for bringing this matter to a satisfactory issue. There would be more money forthcoming for other services.'

'It is an offer that makes one's mouth water,' said Fu-chow with a tender sigh. 'But, unhappily, it can benefit nobody.'

'Do you mean to say that no substitute could be found?'

'Not at all; I could get you fifty for a few taels a head, without looking beyond these walls. But then they would be all Chinese. The execution must take place in public. Do you

suppose that any fellow-countryman of mine could be made to look like an Englishman? Even if you could bribe everybody all round, from the lord of the province downwards, which in truth would not be impossible, you could not deceive 20,000 spectators. No one would run the risk of trying to do it. If there was an Englishman in gaol here, why, then everything could be managed nicely; even if he did not voluntarily consent to it, he could be gagged and "Ling-chihed" in the place of your friend, and the public would be none the wiser. But as it is, the plan is valueless. By this time every worshipper in the temple has heard of the sacrilege that has been committed, and has resolved to witness its expiation. When one is in the oven, it is useless to kick; there is nothing left for your friend, I do assure you, but resignation. When all is over, Twang-hi will no doubt permit you to put up some memorial to him, which will be a comfort to his family.'

CHAPTER XIII.

A SACRIFICE.

ALTHOUGH Fu-chow's view of Pennicuick's position was precisely identical with that of Conway, the latter could not bring himself to communicate it to his friend. He had returned to him after his conference with their late attendant and told him of the difficulty in the way of procuring a substitute, but did not speak of it as insuperable. He also affected to hope that the expected reply from the governor of the province might not, after all, be fatal to his hope of life. He was not a clergyman, whom duty compelled to prepare his friend for death; he felt himself rather in the place of a physician whose mission is to cheer even where he cannot cure. At the same time, it pained him to see the very effect which his own conduct was designed to promote. Pennicuick was no longer suffering in body; he had been rubbed down with hog's lard, and that simple remedy had certainly relieved his pains; cushions had been brought in which made his bed tolerably comfortable; he had taken some refreshment, and was well supplied with cigars; and in these better circumstances his spirits had risen.

'I feel that I shall win out of this yet, Conway,' he said; 'and if so, I shall never forget how you have stuck by me. It was all my own fault that I got into this mess, and it will be all by your credit if I get out of it.'

'I have done very little, my dear fellow; I wish I could do more.'

'Well, you have set matters in train, at all events. Perhaps, as you say, the sentence may be a light one after all, when it will

be easy enough to square matters. And if the worst comes to the worst, I cannot but believe that such a big sum as I am prepared to give will, somehow or other, make matters all right. Why, for 20,000*l.*, even in England, a man might get off most things.'

The inappropriateness of this speech was remarkable considering the intelligence of the speaker, and Conway did not fail to note it. It was clear that his poor friend was clinging to a straw, and absolutely without an argument for the faith that was in him. At one time he would talk almost boisterously of the fun they would have when they got back to Shanghai, and the next minute would advert to the precaution about which he had before been so importunate to the exclusion of all other considerations: 'You will not forget the laudanum, Connie.'

Conway brought him, in the course of the evening, the bottle that contained it, and continued with him until long beyond the usual hour for closing the gaol to visitors. Pennicuick had been removed by that time to a room in the chief gaoler's house, and before his friend left him for the night was made, generally, as comfortable as circumstances permitted. And it was curious what a change this improvement in his position wrought in the prisoner's mind. He bade his friend 'good-bye' quite cheerfully, a somewhat anxious request to see him the first thing in the morning being the only sign of disquietude he exhibited. The fact is, though he did possess great courage, it was, as is often the case, in part the result of a lack of imagination; matters material—a good dinner, a good bed, and present immunity from inconvenience—went farther with him than they would have done with a more delicate organisation. The physical outrage to which he had been subjected had for the time demoralised him, but now that its effects had vanished he was himself again; resolute, hopeful, and secretly sustained by the conviction that he was a man not born to be put out of the world by such base agencies as threatened him. Above all, he had great trust in the wonder-working powers of money. And even if his friend had dwelt upon the special difficulty of his case, instead of ignoring it—on the superstition which, shocked at his crime, demanded its expiation, and before which even the highest officers of the state were compelled to bow in at least apparent reverence—it is probable that his sceptical mind could have still insisted that such arguments tended at worst to put the price of his escape a little higher.

Arthur Conway was buoyed up by none of these delusions. His knowledge of the national character corroborated all that Twang-hi and Fu-chow had said of the hopelessness of his friend's case. When he went for the laudanum, he had sought and ob-

tained a few minutes' interview with the Mandarin, and had openly spoken with him on the question of providing a substitute. He had promised largely in Pennicuick's name, and found the Mandarin even more willing than Fu-chow had been to sell his good offices: but he had plainly told him that the thing could not be done. If a wealthy native had been in the place of the culprit, it would have been possible (though very dangerous) to effect his escape in the way proposed. But as matters stood, the plan was hopeless. Ralph Pennicuick must die.

At the very moment Conway received this answer, his daughter was listening to the offer of his friend's son in the old garden at Richmond. The same sun which shone that day upon the mud walls of the Chinese gaol with its hopeless inmates, shed its glories on that peaceful river and fair scene which had often gladdened Ralph Pennicuick's eyes, on the terraces of the 'Star and Garter.' If Mrs. Conway could have known in what straits he lay that day, even she would have hesitated to let loose her tongue against him. We should all moderate our rancour on many occasions, did we know what was going on in the world while we so speak. On the next day, the last one that was fated to have hope in it for the wretched man, Nelly and her mother were at the peaceful parish church together, not knowing that there was special need of prayer for anyone connected with them; perhaps Nelly paid a devouter attention than usual to the appeal 'for those who travel by land or by water,' thinking of her father journeying in that far country; but the words 'upon all prisoners and captives' fell without meaning on her ear. Raymond was dining at the Trafalgar at Greenwich that day with a few friends. He had been the first to leave the table to smoke his cigar in the balcony, and as he sat alone, listening to the beat of a great ocean-bound steamer, it set him wondering what his father out in China would say upon the receipt of the letter that he had written to him the preceding night, announcing his intention of asking Nelly's hand in marriage on his coming of age; what his father would say, whose sentence at that very moment had reached the hand of the Mandarin at Dhulang: 'Death, by the Ling-chih, within eight-and-forty hours.'

It had been arranged by Conway that he should be sent for, on some pretence connected with the supply of victuals on board the boat, as soon as the news arrived, should it come when he was in his friend's company. And so it happened.

'Well, since it is so late, Conway, you need not trouble to return till to-morrow morning,' said Pennicuick; 'that is, unless—unless you should have heard anything. I begin to think that

this delay on the part of our deputy-lieutenant, or whatever he is, augurs well; if he had meant to be nasty, he would have been quicker; don't you think so?'

'Perhaps,' said Conway. He could not even add, as usual, 'Let us hope so.' He felt that hope was gone, even before he saw the gaoler's face, who was awaiting him outside the door.

'It has come,' said that official; 'and is what I told you it would be; you will hear all about it from the Mandarin.' The man was perfectly callous as to the fact and its consequences, but the matter had an interest for him, because so much fuss had been made about it; he would very gladly have had a hand—well filled with dollars—in his prisoner's escape, had it been possible. But even now there would be some pickings.

'I will speak to the executioner to-night,' added he, as his guest left the gaol; 'you may rely upon it that his first stroke shall do the trick.'

Conway did not reply even by a nod. He felt like a man who, walking in his sleep, has suddenly been awakened in a position of extreme danger. A chaos of nightmare thoughts were thronging his brain, and yet he was face to face with a still worse reality.

Twang-hi had nothing to tell him but the bare fact of the arrival of the decree. He was probably as indifferent about the matter as the gaoler had been, but his superior education suggested a few words of polite condolence. To him, too, there were still remaining some slight contingencies of profit.

It would doubtless be a satisfaction to learn, he said, that on the hill behind his (Twang-hi's) dwelling-place, there was a solitary spot with fir-trees suitable for the erection of a monument to a beloved friend, which was at Conway's service at a fair price to the proprietor.

To the Chinese mind, the tomb is of more consequence than life itself, and the Mandarin was as much scandalised as disappointed to find that this genial offer met with no response.

'My friend,' said Conway gravely, 'is not one who will receive satisfaction from your proposal; and, for my part, I have no heart to consider it. My desire is to do him service while he is alive. You cannot save him, you say; can you extend his span of life?'

'The decree enacts within forty-eight hours. A few hours perhaps may be added under pretence of the tardiness of the messenger—but not without strain upon the strict principles of justice.'

'Every hour shall be paid for, Twang-hi, if delay is indeed all that money can purchase?' And he looked towards the Mandarin with a lingering hope.

‘Honourable sir, I assure you by the bones of my ancestors that nothing more can be done. The Englishman must die. The whole country round demands it, and expects it. I have been already urged to name the hour of execution; but that, as I have said, may be deferred a little.’

Then Conway took his way to the boat, still moored as on that fatal morning at the garden steps, and descended into the cabin, so solitary and silent, and yet which reminded him in its every object of the companionship of his friend. The moon had risen and was shining with such singular brightness that he had no need to light his lamp; it had so shone, he remembered, on the Southampton Water on the night when he had left old England years ago. He had come away in dudgeon, and had indeed made up his mind that his departure should be ‘for good.’ He could not go back again, he had said—he did not even call it ‘home again’—to be tormented and reproached by that shrew his wife; though at the same time he confessed that he had deserved reproach. He had been very foolish and very selfish in those days, for he had dissipated not only his own fortune, but almost all her little dowry. She was not a woman to forgive this, or let her husband forget it. He loved his little daughter; but his wife was always throwing, as it were, the child in his face, and accusing him of having made a beggar of her. What was worse was that she had told the truth, or little worse than the truth. But for his love of pleasure, and especially of that derived from the card-table, his Nelly would have had the reversion of a comfortable competency—two or three hundred a year of her own. But now, ‘if anything should happen to him,’ her mother and she would have a hard matter to live. The girl whom he pictured to himself so fair and delicate—nay, whom he knew to be so, for had he not her photograph in his desk?—and whom he knew too, by her loving letters, to be so tender and true, would have in all probability to go out as a governess, among strangers; to meet with coldness, perhaps rudeness, and to eat the bitter bread of dependence all her life, thanks to her father’s misdoings.

This misery had often pressed upon his mind, but never so bitterly as of late, for an especial reason—though he had so ill-conducted himself of old, he had of late years done his best to remedy the mischief he had committed. He had lived, so far as it was possible for an officer so to live, upon a very crust, in order to save money for the woman he had wronged and her child; and the child at least had become very dear to him. Her school-girl letters, and still more those she had written to him more recently, were what he loved to read (though he was a great reader) more

than his most favourite books; and he was always picturing to himself how she looked and how she spent her days. It was with an exquisite delight that he had found himself in a position to improve her mode of life a little by installing her in the house at Richmond; but stern moralists would not have praised him for his kindness, since the power to confer it had been placed in his hands by an unusual run of good luck at cards. It had been so good and so continuous, that it was not likely even at the considerable points at which he was accustomed to play at the houses of his civilian acquaintance at Shanghai—for he was too wise to play in the regiment except for shillings—that he would have to refund so large a sum; indeed, he had a hundred pounds or so still over, with which he had made up his mind to commence insuring his life. Of course this ought to have been done long ago; but so ought many, many other things. It is something even to begin to amend our ways. It so happened, however, that Conway's good intentions had been frustrated in an unexpected manner.

The medical agent of the insurance office to which he had applied had 'refused his life,' as not being worth having. In England, he said, his chances of existence might be good enough, but too much had been taken out of his constitution to render it probable that he would live to be an old man except under very favourable circumstances, among which could not be reckoned the Chinese climate. This refusal had been a great blow to Conway. He had long made up his mind that when an opportunity did occur he would repair, in this way (as far as it was safe for him so to do, as respected his power of paying the premiums), the wrong that he had done his child. The information that his health was shattered did not move him, so far as it concerned himself, in the least. Except to see his daughter, all ambition had long ago left him; life held no other promise for him; and since even that seemed as far off fulfilment as ever, it had lost all its dearness. What had life to give him, that it should be dear? Nothing, certainly, that it had not given him already; old pleasures without the old appetite, and very few of them. He could afford, in fact, no other pleasure than that of the card-table, occasionally diversified by that of the race-course, and in neither could he afford to lose. The idea that the comforts of his wife and child depended partly upon such gains, shocking as it may be to the moralist, redeemed them in his own eyes. He saw no more harm in standing on doubtful cards at loo than respectable men see in speculating on the Stock Exchange. His principles were all astray, though perhaps his heart was sounder than that of others who have more to say for themselves, morally speaking. He was, or had been, a spendthrift, a man of pleasure—

may, almost a rake—a card-player, a person of very undomestic habits, and he never went to church except at the head of his company. With more than considerable talents, he had in fact wasted the precious gift of life. Though no hero in anyone's eyes, and least of all in his own, he had always, however, done his duty as a soldier, not from the highest motives perhaps, but still from a good one: namely, that what one is bound to do one has no right to shirk. For the rest, he was kind, generous to a fault—so much so, that the economies he now practised for the sake of others were hateful to him—brave as a lion, and gentle as a child. His disposition was formed for love, but love, by some freak of Fate, had been denied to him. He had married in haste, and repented, not at leisure, but almost immediately. It had been a case of love at first sight, which often proves at second sight—and still more, as the sight becomes accustomed to the near view of the beloved object—to be no love at all, but a momentary infatuation which costs the happiness of two lives.

Such was Arthur Conway; a man who, under brighter circumstances, would have shone in the world; but who, as it was, would never shine; who, far from shining, would glimmer on, disreputably rather than otherwise, an exile from his country and his home, with the one pure desire of his life ungratified, till the prophecy of the insurance agent should come to pass. That prophecy, which had rendered his attempt to provide for his loved one, and to remedy the wrong he had done her mother, void, had seemed the last drop in his full cup of bitterness. He had started on the present expedition partly to oblige his friend, but also partly to save money, since, until he returned to his regiment, he would be incurring no expenses; but it had not been an expedition of pleasure to begin with, and how miserably was it about to end!

These thoughts, and many others, and all devoid of cheer, crowded on Arthur Conway's mind as he sat alone at the open window of the cabin, watching the moonlight on the level stream. How calm and quiet it was, yet how much calmer up yonder in the blue sky, among the quiet stars,

Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest!—

was the line that haunted him as he gazed out upon them. How weary of the world *he* was, and how *he* longed to be at rest! Then, all of a sudden, a thought shot through him, swift as lightning, and, like it, of livid brightness: 'Ralph Pennicuik is doomed to die, and would give 20,000*l.* for a substitute. Why should I not take the money, and die for him—and my Nelly?'

CHAPTER XIV.

CONWAY'S WILL.

By persons who pride themselves upon their 'ballast,' Arthur Conway would without doubt have been termed 'a creature of impulse;' and to a certain extent this was true; but, unlike the class of men thus designated, his impulses were lasting. And this was especially the case with his good impulses. When he did think of doing an unselfish act, he at once put it into effect, where a better man would often 'think it over,' and, upon mature consideration, *not* do it. Perhaps Conway thus acted from a doubt of his own constancy, or from a sense that he had many 'back payments' of the kind to make, and had better not have another score set down to his discredit; but at all events so it was. He never went from his word to another man, nor broke—to himself—a determination he had once formed for good. This extraordinary resolve of his to sell his life at a great price for the benefit of his belongings, instead therefore of 'passing through his mind,' as so many fine notions of self-sacrifice do pass with many of us, remained there, as much a settled plan as though he had been revolving it for years. The obstacle that would have occurred to most men in such a case, that Pennicueik would not consent to such an arrangement, did not occur to him, because he knew his friend so well. However the man might seem to struggle against such a temptation, he would, Conway felt, give way at last; the view that would present itself to Pennicueik's mind would, after the first words of grateful acknowledgment, be of the most sensible and matter-of-fact description. 'This poor devil has little to live for, whereas I have a great deal: it is deuced hard lines on him to have to put his neck in a halter for another man; but he cannot do better with himself as regards his daughter, to benefit whom seems to be the one wish of his heart; it's like drawing for the militia: one man finds it to his advantage to serve, and another to purchase a substitute.'

This estimate of his friend's views (though he felt his mood was bitter) would turn out, Conway was persuaded, to be essentially correct. He had long ago lost his illusions; and now, within a few hours of his end, it was not likely any of them should return. The poet's statement that no one is such a prey to dull despondency that he can resign this 'pleasing anxious being' without a sigh, is not of universal application; his being was so 'anxious' to poor Conway, and so little 'pleasing,' that he could not sigh about it;

but before leaving the 'warm precincts of the cheerful day,' it was natural that he should cast a lingering though not a longing look behind.

He opened his old desk and spread out the contents before him; there were some twenty letters in it, almost all from Nelly, with one or two from his wife. The former were all long ones; some containing whole pages of mere childish prattle, but singularly frank and tender; about the weather and her walks; about a caged bird she had purchased with the guinea he had sent her on her birthday, years ago; about a visit to the Zoological Gardens, where she had seen some creatures that had come from China, such perhaps as he saw every day at large; about a visit to the play. These little nothings—which all ended with her 'dearest love,' and hopes to see him home—were cruel daggers now, and pierced his heart. It was worse still, when, growing older, she bewailed his absence, and spoke of her affection for the kind father who was always reaching out his hand from far to give her pleasure; of how nice dear Raymond was, and of how much they saw of him, though their home in Gower Street could scarcely be attractive to the bright young fellow; of Mrs. Wardlaw's kindness, and how often she talked about her papa to the good-natured old lady, whom she was sure he would like 'when he came home'—that was always dwelt upon—if it was only because she spoilt his Nelly so. There were tender fears, too, that he was pinching himself as to money matters, in order to provide indulgences for her and dear mamma at home. ['She shall never *know*,' he murmured to himself, while the hot tears rolled down his sunburnt cheeks that had been strangers to them for many a year, 'she shall *never* know.'] In her last letter she had sent her photograph, and over that he hung in a burst of grief. How beautiful she was; how good and true she looked; how he had dreamt of seeing her one day—he knew not when, but some day surely—and clasping her to his loving heart! And now that would never be. The idea was almost unendurable. He dared not even write to her one word of farewell. At such a time he could not write a lie; and if he told the truth, he would be embittering the very life to secure whose happiness he was about to die. Even as it was, she would weep for him; those bright eyes would be dim for many a day, after the news got home. For she had looked forward too, sweet soul, to seeing him. And that would never be.

Then he took the letters one by one, tore them up into small pieces,—so sharp was the pain as he did it, that it was the 'Ling-chih' (thought he bitterly) already for him,—and cast them out of the window; but over the photograph he pored and pored, and could

not part from it, as from the letters, but placed it next his heart, the only treasure he—who was to die so rich—had left to him. For a little this unmanned him quite; but there was something, as he knew, to make his purpose firm again, and which he had reserved with that intent. The letters of his wife still lay before him, and these, he was well aware, would steel his heart, and give him courage; for they were arguments, keen, strong, and uncompromising, upon the other side. They might not have seemed so to a less sensitive mind, nor even to a well-regulated one, conscious of having given cause of offence, but to Arthur Conway they were powerful incentives to the act he had in contemplation. They were not vituperative in their language, although there was a sharp hit now and then; but the whole tone of them—even to their very brevity—was that of reproach. If there was a gleam of affection beyond the ‘My dear Arthur’ and ‘Your affectionate wife’—and now and then there was—the effect of it was at once erased—it almost seemed designedly—by the next sentence. If Mrs. Conway permitted herself to express a hope that her husband was comfortable in his circumstances, she added an intimation that it was more than he deserved; if she dropped an apprehension that he might be lonely, she took care to guard against the possibility of a mistake that he had anybody to blame for it but himself; if she lamented his exile, she reminded him that with ordinary prudence there would have been no necessity for it. This is the sort of behaviour that has driven some married men out of their minds, and many more out of their homes; to one of Conway’s type it was torture. He was remorseful for what he had done, and did not need such vulgar reminders; he felt confident (and perhaps with justice) that had he been in his wife’s place he could never have ‘gone on’ in this aggravating style against one who had expressed sorrow for his misdeeds, and had gone into voluntary exile to atone for them. A man endures some things in a woman because she is his wife, but for that very reason other sins of hers appear less pardonable. ‘The woman is a shrew’ was Conway’s verdict upon her; though he knew she had good qualities; and it was this last knowledge that gave her the power of being so unpleasant. Every line of her handwriting cost him a pang, though of a very different sort from that inflicted by the correspondence of his daughter: he had taken the best way to put himself out of love with life in the perusal of this second batch of letters, which, like the others, he presently tore up and cast away.

So certain was he, by this time, of what would be his course of conduct, that he then sat down and remade his will: the old one was already in his desk, so that he had but to copy the legal form;

but the sums at his disposal were different indeed from what they had been. To his wife he left the dowry he had squandered—he made especial reference to that fact—and also the same amount of property he had himself possessed at the date of his marriage. She could therefore have nothing to complain of in the way of loss. To his daughter he left the residue, amounting to 16,000*l*. He hesitated as to making some statement which should account for his possession of the sum, but in the end determined to omit it. He had been always a truthful man, and the idea of his last act on earth being a lie revolted him. Besides, Pennicuick was a much better hand at making up a story than he, and would have no scruples about it: he might say that he had realised this fortune on the race-course, or in a speculation upon tea or opium; only he must be careful to show that this had happened recently. It would be terrible that his wife and daughter should imagine he had been in the enjoyment of this wealth for any time, and yet had not shared it with them. His friend (with the gaoler, perhaps) would be a witness to this will, and therefore the properest person to explain it. This might be a little difficult: but after all, when money is left, the recipients are not very curious as to how it came; though, when money is lost, folks are very importunate to know what has become of it.

His worldly affairs being thus disposed of and those belonging to him well provided for, he began for the first time to look his own fate in the face. He had no doubt that, for a few hundred pounds which Pennicuick had with him, and for the expenditure of which he could repay himself if he chose out of his own (Conway's) property at Shanghae, the officials could be bribed to make the proposed substitution; but it might be necessary, for the deception of the public, that he should actually suffer the cruel punishment the law had decreed; the escape from it by laudanum, though easy enough to the real culprit, might not be open to himself, on account of the investigations that it would necessitate, the risk of which the Mandarin and the rest would be unwilling to face. He might have no choice but to trust to the purchased humanity of the executioner. Viewed in this light, his case was even worse than Pennicuick's had been, and it had seemed to him a few hours ago that the position of Pennicuick had been very terrible. Curiously enough, now that he himself stood in his friend's place, there was no terror in it, except for the physical fear in connection with the execution itself. Without being what would be considered, by a meeting of Convocation, orthodox, Conway entertained a wholesome faith that matters would be better arranged for him upon the other side of

the grave than he had arranged them for himself on this; after all, there could be but an hour's intense pain, at most—probably it would last but a second—to be followed by an eternity of—what he felt would to him be Heaven, even though there should be nothing better—Rest; there would be no more carking cares, nor vain regrets, nor unsatisfied longings, and Nelly's life would be made smooth for her.

These reflections were interrupted by the return of the soldiers and sailors to the boat, who in the daytime now went where they would, passing only the night on board; it was understood, however, that they were to hold themselves in readiness to return to Shanghae with the surviving Englishman when his friend should have expiated his offence against the law. From their unwonted loquacity, more than from what he actually overheard, Conway judged they had already become acquainted with the nature of the Lieutenant-Governor's sentence, and that it gave them no little satisfaction. A few hours ago he would have felt indignant against them for this brutality towards 'poor Pennicwick,' though he was well aware that the latter's manners had been the reverse of conciliatory; but, as it was, it mattered nothing. They would be aware, of course, of the substitution of his friend for himself; but as that would be done under authority, he knew that they would be far too wise to stir in the matter from any abstract devotion to the principles of justice.

If expectation might ever plead excuse for wakefulness, it will be thought that it might have done so that night with Arthur Conway; but such was not the case. The anxieties that had hitherto haunted his pillow were now in fact laid to rest, and the personal apprehensions that occupied their place were altogether disproportionate to them. He desired to sleep, not so much to forget his woes, as to gain strength and courage for the endurance of them: and he soon fell into a tranquil slumber, from which (as generally happens to those who have cause to wake) he woke long before his usual hour. A task lay before him such as has rarely fallen to the lot of man to undertake, and the time allotted to him between that present hour and the commencement of eternity—or mere 'cold obstruction,' as the case might be—was short indeed. Upon one thing he was resolved: that neither by bribes nor persuasion would he endeavour to move the Mandarin to postpone the execution. He was too sensible—and it may be added, perhaps, too self-conscious—to underrate the greatness and rarity of the sacrifice he was about to make; but he felt like a man who has some painful operation to undergo, and wishes to have it over, rather than *like one who, about to lose it, clings to dear life.*

CHAPTER XV.

THE BARGAIN.

EARLY as it was when Arthur Conway took his way that morning to the prison where his friend lay, but which he had resolved was henceforth to be his own dwelling-place, there were people in that land of Morning already astir. On a waste piece of ground adjoining the gaol, the existence of which had somewhat excited his curiosity—for in China it is unusual to see any spot uncultivated—a knot of natives were collected, one of whom was raised above the others on a ladder. As he drew near he heard the 'thump thump' of a wooden mallet, and perceived that they were fixing into the earth a post about eight feet high. He felt a sickness at his heart, and knew that his face grew pale as he approached these men—for the object of their preparations was plain to him—but nevertheless he gave them a 'good morning.'

'This is the execution ground, I suppose, my friends?'

'Yes,' answered one subserviently, 'and this is the post for the "Ling-chih" to-morrow. There will be half the province come to see it, but there will be ever so good a view for your honourable worship from the roof of the gaol yonder.'

There was no intentional cruelty in the man's speech: he knew the destined victim was Conway's friend; but since the execution was to be, he thought it was probable that he would wish to witness the spectacle. There is a great deal of philosophy in China besides that which is cultivated by the learned, and astonishingly little sentiment.

Conway found his friend—who was usually a late sleeper—very much awake, and in a state of anxiety the expression of which he strove in vain to conceal. He had discovered by some behaviour of the under-gaoler on the preceding night that the decree from the lieutenant-governor had arrived, but had been too proud—or perhaps too nervous—to inquire what it was.

'I am sure it has come, Connie. Why was I not told at once?'

'Because I wished you to pass as good a night as might be possible, Penn,' answered his friend gravely.

'The news is bad, then, is it?'

'It is as bad as can possibly be, Pennicnick.'

'It is not to be that infernal "Ling-chih," surely?'

'Yes, that is the sentence.'

Pennicuick turned very pale, and sat down on his little bed. He seemed to swallow something twice or thrice in his throat before he spoke.

‘And when is it to be, Conway?’

‘That is not quite certain. It will probably be to-morrow, but the Mandarin will, I think, consent—for a consideration—to put it off for a little; perhaps a day or so.’

Pennicuick made an impatient movement with his hands. ‘No,’ said he; ‘if the d—d thing is to be done, let it be done quickly.’

It was strange, Conway thought, that he did not even allude to the plan of the substitute, about which he had been apparently so confident a few hours ago, notwithstanding that the difficulty of procuring one had been stated to him. Perhaps the fact was that he had never really had much hope of it.

‘How long will it last?’ inquired Pennicuick presently; ‘I mean, the pain of the thing.’ Then Conway told him what Fuchow had said about seeing the executioner.

‘Well, well, that is no matter,’ said Pennicuick grimly. ‘The scoundrels shall have no more of my money. I am independent of them, so far, thanks to what I have here;’ and he tapped his waistcoat pocket where lay the bottle of laudanum. Curiously enough, Conway had for the moment forgotten the laudanum, which would certainly not have happened had he had his friend’s case only to think about, and not his own.

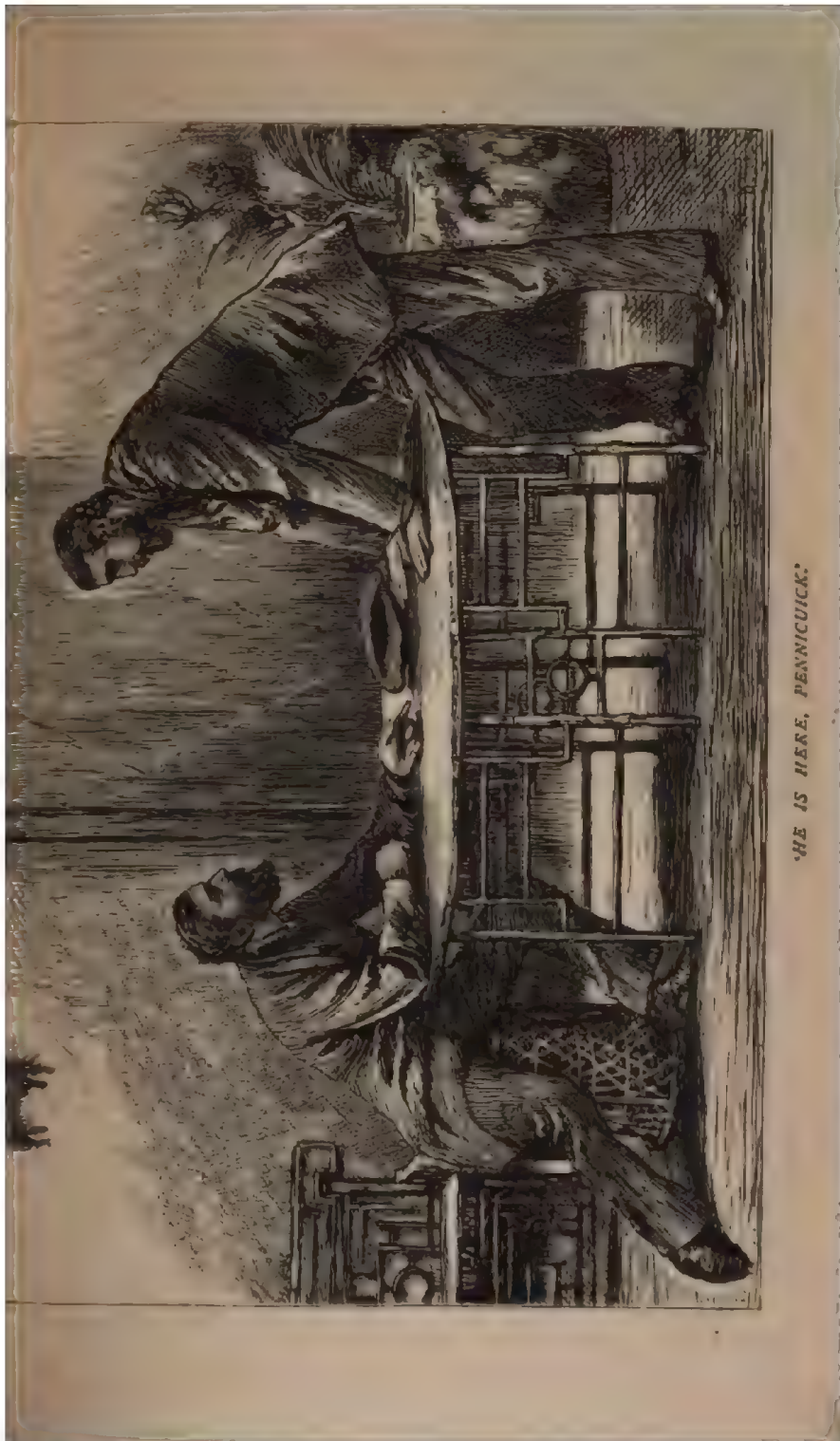
‘Still, it’s deuced hard lines, Connie, to die like a dog, and twenty times worse than a dog, at the hands of these idiots.’ He uttered a fierce oath and gnashed his teeth.

Still Conway did not speak; it was not that he did not pity his friend, and was willing enough to put an end to his apprehensions. But he felt that it was necessary for his purpose to bide his time. In that supreme hour, all pretences, all delusions, were swept away from his mind; he felt that it was within the bounds of possibility that if Ralph Pennicuick were cognisant of his friend’s necessities he might drive a bargain with him even for his life. At last the other touched upon the desired topic.

‘It is the fact, then, that these scoundrels could not be bought even with 20,000l.? I should have thought that such a sum as that would have induced Twang-hi himself to take my place.’

‘It would be easy enough, Pennicuick, for such a sum, to bribe these men all round, and of course to find a substitute; but, as I gave you to understand last night, no Chinese could carry out the deception. The trick would be discovered at once, and all who connived at it would be punished.’

‘That is only a question of risk, which again is a question of



“HE IS HERE, PENNICUICK.”

"How much," urged Pennicuick. "Sooner than lose my skin, I would pay 30,000*l.* Think of what such a fortune would be in England—how much more, then, in China!"

"No money would do it, Pennicuick; unless some European could be induced to die for you."

"That is as much as to say "You're a dead man,"" answered Pennicuick stolidly.

"Not quite. I know one Englishman who would not shrink—at least, I think so—with such a prize in view, from such a sacrifice."

"What matters, since he is not here?"

"He is here, Pennicuick; he stands before you."

"You! You, Conway? Are you mad?"

"No, Penn, although things have gone with me almost ill enough to drive me mad. To me life has long been valueless, except for a hope that draws no nearer to its fulfilment. I had wished to see my dear daughter before youth and beauty had passed away from her; but, if I die for you, I must be content to feel that, in so doing, I purchase for her ease and comfort. I owe her mother, too, some reparation. The 20,000*l.*—you spoke just now of 30,000*l.*, but the first sum will suffice—that you were prepared to give to some Chinaman, will be given to your friend instead; a change with which you will not be inclined to quarrel. Some more money will be necessary, doubtless, to induce the authorities to consent to the substitution; but that, I think, may be arranged for a small sum. We are like enough—being both Englishmen—to pass for one another on the scaffold; for it will perhaps be necessary for me to go thither. It is not certain that that easy way of going out of the world—the laudanum—will be open to me, as it was for you. It will probably be made a *sine quâ non* that I should be made a show of. Do you hear that hammering, Penn, outside? They are putting the post into the earth, to which I shall be tied before the torment."

"Conway, I can't permit it," exclaimed Pennicuick suddenly: his face was pale and wet, and his voice greatly agitated. "What will they say at home when they come to hear that I let you die for me?"

"They must never know it at home, Pennicuick. I must forfeit the last poor privilege of writing one line of Farewell—for a lie I could not write. You must explain it all—what way you please. They threw me into prison, say at once, and cut off all communication between us; I was allowed no writing materials; you will have time enough between this and when you see—when you see my Nelly, to invent the best excuse. The truth would kill her. I should have thrown my life away, since the money for

which I sold it for her sake would never give her pleasure. Do you follow me ?

‘ Yes, I am listening. I do not say I will consent, Connie. It seems a baseness, somehow.’

‘ It is not a baseness if I wish it : if I had rather die and make my daughter happy, than live on, and know her to be poor and wretched. It is a voluntary act on my part ; it is not as if you asked me to make the bargain.’

‘ That is true,’ said Pennicuick, moistening his dry lips.

‘ Of course that makes all the difference,’ continued Conway. ‘ I have looked at the matter all round, and am not acting on the impulse. Here is my will, in which I have left the 20,000*l.* as though it were already mine. It shall be witnessed, and then you will take charge of it and give it into my wife’s hands. There will be nothing more to give of mine—not one line of my hand-writing, no word of Good-bye.’ Here Conway’s voice broke down for the first time.

‘ But my dear Connie, supposing this sad matter should be thus arranged, how is your possession of so much money to be accounted for ?’

‘ I have thought of that, of course ; but you have a better head than mine for invention. Say I made some fortunate investment in opium, don’t say I won it on the turf, if you can help it ; it will have been gained honestly enough, and hardly enough, Heaven knows. There is something in the Bible about dying for one’s friend. “ Yet for a good man some would even dare to die,” I think it runs. Though’ (here he smiled) ‘ I am not quite sure about the application.’

‘ Well, it don’t much matter as to whether I am a good man, Connie. You are not dying for me, you see, but for my money.’

‘ That is no doubt one way of putting it,’ said Conway drily. He had accurately forecast what would be his friend’s view of this matter, and had divested himself of all illusions with respect to him, but he had not expected him to use so calculating a style in the very acceptance of his sacrifice. He knew that the affair would have presented itself in this gross light to Pennicuick sooner or later ; but that he should thus view it, so immediately, with the sound of the preparations for his friend’s death ringing in his very ears, disgusted him, and his face betrayed it.

‘ I am not underrating the service you propose to do for me, Conway,’ said the other apologetically. ‘ If you are saying to yourself that I would not do as much for you, if our positions were reversed, you are quite right. Still, to a poor man—that is, to a man whose family is poor—20,000*l.* is a great heap of money.’

'No 'doubt,' answered Conway scornfully. 'One might even say that it is a good deal more than some people's lives are worth.'

'That sarcasm cuts both ways, Connie. Come, don't let us quarrel at such a time as this. If your offer is genuine, I accept it, and there's an end. I am deeply and most unfeignedly obliged to you for it; but I protest against being compelled to look upon it solely as an act of self-sacrifice. For if, as you have suggested, my own life may not be valuable to the community, still I have some self-respect, and that I should lose utterly if I were to picture myself as escaping from this calamity at your expense, without, as it were, value received on your part. Even as it is, I own to having serious scruples: it is not a matter on which any man can congratulate himself.'

'I do not wish you to feel any sense of obligation, Pennicuick,' answered the other coldly. 'There is no time, even if I had the desire, for the discussion of the sentimental aspect of the affair. My hours are numbered, and I cannot afford to waste them.'

'Conway, old fellow, you do me wrong,' said Pennicuick frankly. 'You do not understand my feelings; it is hard that you should compel me to confess that I feel ashamed of myself, but so it is. A man ought to take the consequences of his own acts upon his own shoulders, and not shift them to those of his friend; I feel that, I do indeed. Yes.' Here he began to walk rapidly to and fro. 'I feel that when the thing is done, I shall not be able to look other men in the face, as I used to do. In what I said about the money, I was only trying to excuse myself. Shake hands. Now, look you, you shall not die if I can help it. Make what arrangements about the substitution you please, but above all things stipulate for delay. Offer what you like—five pounds an hour, or ten—and then I will set off at once for Shanghai, and, if money can do it, I will return to save you.'

'In which case I shall have risked my life for nothing,' observed Conway coldly.

'No; not so. I will pay you'—he hesitated—'yes, I will pay you for the risk all the same; it is not blood-money. I do not believe the worst will happen—F'u-chow is your friend, and the Mandarin; they will do more for you than for me; I confidently expect that you will procure such a reprieve as may give me time to obtain your pardon through the Embassy; if so, you will have the money for yourself; if, on the other hand, I do not return in time to save you, there will be the 20,000*l.* for your family.'

'Very good: I agree to that.'

In his heart of hearts Pennicuick was well aware that there was no such hope as that he spoke of; and Conway knew that he was

aware of it. The latter quite understood that the alternative had suggested itself to his companion as a salve to his conscience ; as a something that should mitigate the unpleasantness of leaving his friend at the very foot of the scaffold. In his bitterness, he even felt that it might be an excuse for departing with a whole skin, as soon as the necessary permission should be purchased from the Mandarin, and placing himself in safety. But it was of no use, and would only make matters more painful, to impute these motives. It was better to say simply, 'I agree to that,' than to expose the futility of the arrangement.

It was fortunate that Conway's estimate of his friend's character had been already made, and correctly made : otherwise, the manner in which his offer of a life for a life had been accepted would have been indeed disappointing. As matters were, it was perhaps advantageous to him that no element of sentiment was to be introduced into the affair, beyond what belonged to it, and which had no reference to Pennicwick. It left his mind more firm and free for the transaction of the necessary arrangements with the authorities.

CHAPTER XVI.

LAST WORDS.

IN China almost everything is possible to one who fights justice with a full purse. Conway had failed, it is true, to persuade the Mandarin to save the life of his friend in one way, but he accomplished it in the other. Twang-hi, who had been incorruptible when the scheme menaced his own safety, allowed himself to be won over by another one hundred pounds to countenance a plan which, although it had its risks, was not very likely to be dangerous, since all concerned in it had their good reasons—mostly in silver money—for helping to delude the lieutenant-governor, and (especially) the public. If one barbarian chose to die in place of another barbarian, that was not Twang-hi's affair, except as regarded the price charged for permitting the exchange. All he insisted upon was that somebody should undergo the punishment of the 'Ling-chih' within forty-eight hours of the receipt of the sentence—unless some very excellent reasons (in gold) should be advanced for a little delay. One single day's reprieve he might be induced, he thought, to grant in the interests of mercy, and at the rate of 5*l.* an hour. But of this Conway did not care to avail himself. Not one day, nor ten, would have sufficed for his friend to have gone to, and returned from, Shanghae : all loophole of escape that way was barred. Thirty-six hours, then—or, if the destined victim should alter his mind and open his purse,—perhaps sixty hours of life were all that

was now left to Arthur Conway. On his departure from the audience chamber of the Mandarin he was almost embraced by Kushan, to whom his Excellency had communicated the Englishman's chivalric purpose.

'You are about, honourable sir, to perform one of the noblest of human acts. In China, where philosophy is respected, it is common enough that a man should die for his friend [he might have added, 'or even for a stranger']; but being, as you are, a barbarian, the sacrifice is infinitely more creditable to you.'

Conway did not express himself as flattered by this gentleman's good opinion, nor take the trouble to undeceive him as to his own motives; he only bowed in an abstracted manner—indeed, his mind was sufficiently occupied with other matters—and would have passed out of the house, had not the master of the ceremonies again addressed him.

'Gold is emptiness, silver is emptiness, honourable sir; how after death can we retain them in our grasp? The thing remains, the man departs.'

'Very true, Kushan; but I am in a hurry.'

'Too much haste is sometimes the handmaid of delay.'

'What is it, Kushan? Speak your real meaning, my good friend, if you have any.'

'There is but one thing real,' answered the other blandly; 'namely, the effect of virtuous deeds leaving their lasting impress on an individual being. If you wish to go to heaven, you must observe several things; notably, not to destroy your children; not to sing on the twelfth or thirtieth of the month; and never to spit with your face to the north star. Above all things, be munificent to the learned; if a man is also a scholar, he may always do us an ill turn.'

'How so, Kushan?'

'Such men have the gift of writing, and their messages are borne afar, though they themselves remain in one place. It is like employing a bird of the air, since he who carries their news may not even know from whence it comes.'

'I see,' said Conway; 'an anonymous letter such as would disarrange my plan might reach the governor of the province, unless a certain precaution is taken.'

'Heaven alone knows what may happen,' observed Kushan with pious unction. 'What you hint at, however, appears to me not improbable.'

'I confess, Kushan, that it had not been my intention to purchase your silence, on account of the opinion I entertained of your learning and morality; but since you have expressed a wish for

more money, it shall be gratified. I hope this will prove to my advantage.'

'When a person has been guilty of a wicked thought,' returned Kushan calmly, 'and afterwards repents and does the right thing, he will in due time be certainly rewarded.'

'There was once a philosopher,' said Conway, producing his purse, 'of great renown in my own land, of whom you remind me much.'

'I dare not presume to rival such a reputation,' answered the other; 'but what was his honourable name?'

'His name, my friend,' said Conway, as he pressed three taels into the other's hand, 'was Pecksniff.'

The major domo gravely entered Mr. Pecksniff's name in his tablets, and announced his intention of burning a little incense once a fortnight to that sage's memory.

The gaoler and his myrmidon, Sheer Singh, were found even more amenable to the new arrangement than Conway had expected. Since the Mandarin, their immediate superior, was in favour of the exchange of culprits, it was not, they said, for them (as they pocketed their hush-money) to express objections. It therefore remained only to secure the silence of Fu-chow, who had been by this time officially acknowledged by his distinguished parent, and was held in much respect accordingly by those who had been his gaolers; though still up at the prison, he was now a free man, the arrival of the sentence of death having settled the case and done away with the necessity of his safe keeping. Even in England, where the judges are incorruptible, it is often found practicable to arrange matters with a prosecutor, so that this last transaction seemed to Conway to be the easiest to effect of all. It proved, however, to be the most difficult. Fu-chow protested with indignation that nothing should induce him to connive at the escape from justice of one who had outraged both human and divine institutions by stealing the sacred Shay-le. His line of argument seemed to be so similar—in its high tone and moral sublimity—to that of Kushan and his master, that Conway at once took out his purse.

But Fu-chow, with a dignified gesture of refusal, replied, 'Honourable sir, you mistake. In no case would I take your money, to whom I am already under such obligations.'

'But it is not my money,' interposed Conway; 'my friend of course pays for the whole transaction.'

'Possibly, but the matter is not one to be settled in that way at all. A man who has committed so heinous a crime must not be permitted to purchase impunity by a mere fine; not to mention

that it is also proposed to punish another in his stead, who is innocent, and what is more,' added Fu-chow naively, 'for whom I have a high regard.'

'I am aware of it, Fu-chow, and I thank you; but you must understand that it is at my request this exchange is made. You are thwarting me in a purpose that I have near at heart.'

'The punishment for sacrilege is to be cut into ten thousand pieces,' observed Fu-chow quietly.

'Ah! you, deceived me, then,' cried Conway, 'when you said my friend and you were quits. You are still his enemy, and desire his destruction. There lies the root of your objection.'

'He shall die,' said Fu-chow; 'he and no other: my mind is fixed upon that score.'

'It is contrary to your faith, Fu-chow, as to mine,' pleaded Conway, 'to nourish such bitter revenge against a fellow-creature. I acknowledge that this man has misbehaved himself towards you——'

Fu-chow waved his hand as if to put that suggestion by. 'It is not that at all,' said he.

'You are thinking of your daughter, and of the insult this man put upon her.'

'A man may think what he likes,' said Fu-chow sententiously, 'provided that his actions are in accordance with the law.'

'Listen, my friend,' said Conway, 'and remember, as you do so, that I did you a good service in the matter to which you have referred. I, too, have a daughter, young, fair, but whom, unlike you, I shall never see again. I do not say so because I am about to die. It would be all the same if I lived. I shall be—always—too poor to go home to see her. She is herself almost penniless, and the thought of her being so, of the slights—perhaps the insults—she may suffer from the rich in consequence, is wormwood to me. Do you understand?'

'Yes, indeed; for I also am a father.'

'Well, if I succeed in this plan of substituting myself for my friend, I shall receive from him a large fortune—that is to say, my daughter will do so. She is dearer to me far than life. To ensure her well-being, to place her above the reach of poverty, has been the dream of my existence; but, had I lived, it could have been only a dream. Now there is at last—at a small sacrifice, for I am not in love with life, Fu-chow—a certainty of its being realised. If you oppose yourself to it, you will be doing me an ill turn indeed for such good services as you may owe me. If you have any gratitude in your heart towards me, if you have a genuine love for your own daughter, you will listen to my entreaty, who am pleading on behalf of mine.'

For more than a minute Fu-chow kept silence ; his flat bare face, which in general exhibited only a good-natured vacuity, looked grave and even thoughtful. He was evidently giving his whole mind to the situation.

At last he said, ' If I consent to this, I must be well paid—I mean, really well ; better than Twang-hi and the rest of them.'

Up to that moment Conway had believed this man to be moved by that touch of nature which is said to make the whole world kin ; but somehow he wished that to his parting view this particular specimen of humanity had shown himself in a less sordid light. His disgust at finding him as grasping as the rest of his fellow-countrymen was considerable.

' It is, then, a question of money with you, after all,' said he, coldly. ' Well, my friend is not in a position to haggle ; but if you mean to be greedy, you must be content to wait till he reaches Shanghae. A man doesn't carry his whole fortune in his pocket.'

' What I require, I must have at once,' answered Fu-chow doggedly. ' Your friend will not want money for his travelling expenses, since he will have the boat at his disposal. If he doesn't choose to pay up handsomely, he shall not go at all. How much was given to the Mandarin ?'

' In all, 200*l.* English ; but 100*l.* was paid in the first instance to ensure to my friend civil treatment in the prison. You yourself know best with what result.'

' I do not care one cash how the man was treated,' answered Fu-chow bluntly. ' It is a subject that doesn't interest me. What I have to say is that I also must have 200*l.* for connivance in the scheme proposed. He may either give it, or keep it and suffer the "Ling-chih." These are my lowest terms.'

' I have already said, Fu-chow, that we are in your hands,' answered Conway coldly. ' We have no choice but to submit to your exactions, which however are, in my opinion, infamous.'

Fu-chow was a plain man, even for a Chinese, but he had beautiful teeth. These he now showed. ' You think so ?' said he, good-naturedly. ' Well, in affairs of business there are generally two opinions.'

' You shall have the 200*l.*,' said Conway. He had neither time nor patience to argue the matter ; nor, indeed, did the amount of the bribe concern him very nearly. It was not to be expected, under the circumstances, that he should be very solicitous about details.

' I conclude,' continued he, ' that you will not now return with my friend to Shanghae.'

' Certainly not,' said Fu-chow drily. ' I have had quite enough of that gentleman. It would have pleased me to see the last of

him out yonder' (here he pointed with his thumb in the direction of the execution ground); 'but as it is, I shall still stay.'

'To see the last of *me*, I suppose,' thought Conway bitterly. 'Well, it is no matter; only I had fallen into the error of mistaking this brute for a man.'

It was curious how this misconception affected him; he was annoyed to find that his friend's view of their late attendant was a more correct one than his own.

The fact was, his mind was eminently just, very remarkably so considering his circumstances and manner of life; and he had contrived up to that point not only to make allowances for this man, who had betrayed his employer and was about to be the cause of his own destruction, but even to think well of him. He managed, however, to stifle his disgust.

'Well, if you get this money, Fu-chow, you will at least make such final arrangements as may be necessary; I mean, as to the departure and safe conduct of my friend. It is his desire to start for Shanghai at once.'

'I can well believe it,' returned the captain, with a contemptuous smile. 'I will do all that is necessary, so soon as I touch the money. I would rather have it in my hands, you see, than a promise from this good gentleman in my ear for ten times as much.'

It would have been very difficult to explain to Fu-chow what is understood by the phrase 'a man of honour,' even had Conway felt inclined to attempt that feat. As it was, he only said, 'You shall have your 200*l.*, sir;' and turned upon his heel.

Within half an hour he had kept his word, and the last obstacle had been removed to his friend's escape and to his own destruction.

When Conway returned to Pennicuick with the news that the exchange had been effected, the latter was greatly moved. The actual state of the case—the positive reality that his friend was about to die for him—had perhaps not struck him before with its full force. Just as when he had been awaiting his own sentence he could hardly realise the idea that it could be his death doom, so up to this time it had probably seemed something too monstrous and horrible that his friend should be actually sacrificed in his stead. For the moment, since the people had been excited by his thoughtless act, it might have been necessary to make some show of severity; but the authorities could surely never contemplate the execution of a British subject of position for such an offence, in earnest. So he had reasoned, or endeavoured to reason, in his own case; and when this hope had turned out to be hopeless and

the case had become his friend's, he had said to himself, 'It will be easier for Conway to get out of this scrape than it was for me; he can speak these scoundrels' language, and make friends of them. They will, surely, never carry matters to extremity with him, especially as they will be aware of his innocence. They two would somehow still get back again together to Shanghae, and the whole adventure would serve for them to talk about over their cigars.

But it was different now that Conway had come back with a pale grave face, saying, 'You are free, Pennicuick; get you gone, while you may, at once.'

'And you?'

'I am to suffer death to-morrow evening. You will think of me, Penn, when the hour arrives, and say a "God be with you." Don't let us talk of it, however; for I would wish to play the man before these people.'

'Great Heaven! Do you mean to say they will do it?'

'They will unquestionably do it. It is settled.'

'But not to-morrow! You have surely made arrangements for delay? I have money enough left to purchase that; I will not lose one instant in getting help, and——'

'It is useless, Pennicuick. You have not much money left. Everybody, inclusive of our friend Fu-chow, has been as greedy as a pike. And even if it were otherwise, the money would be thrown away. Help is out of the question. A few hours of life—for that could be all it would purchase—are of no moment to me. Since I am to die, the quicker death comes the better.'

'Oh, Connie! This is too terrible!'

For a moment the hard heart of the man had melted within him.

'You have got my will, Pennicuick, which we will now have witnessed. It rests with you to see that its conditions are made effectual. I put my confidence in you, being persuaded that you will not wrong a dying man.'

'And a man who is also dying in my stead,' put in Pennicuick.

Conway had not expected him to exhibit such feeling—his voice was not only tender and solemn, but even reverent.

'I need add nothing more, then, on that head,' continued Conway, when the formality had been completed by help of the gaoler. 'Tell her—tell Nelly—that my last thoughts were for her. I have fancied of late, from something in her letters—nothing distinct—but to me, who have studied them well, there seems a strain of tenderness in relation to your son Raymond. Of

course, under other circumstances, this could never have borne fruit. I do not blame you for that; it is your nature, Pennicuck, to exaggerate the claims of wealth: I say, had Nelly been poor, I know this would have been out of the question. But now, since she is rich—at your expense, you will say, but surely also at mine—there need be no such objection. I may be mistaken in this matter altogether, but if the young people love one another, Penn, let them marry.’

For a moment Pennicuck did not answer; he had not suspected the fact of which his friend informed him, and under other circumstances it would have incensed as well as surprised him: but it was no time for anger now. Moreover, what Conway had said was reasonable enough. Pennicuck’s chief objection, indeed the only one, to such a match, would have been Nelly’s poverty: and she would be now no longer poor.

‘I will be no obstacle to Raymond’s views as to your daughter,’ replied he presently, ‘though I was unaware they tended that way; there will, as you say, be now no great inequality in the way of money between them; since, until my death—after this considerable diminution in my fortune—he can expect but little from me.’

A shadow flitted across Conway’s face: the allusion to the price he had sold his life for pained him, for it showed a grudging spirit. Moreover, it seemed hard that this man should talk so quietly about his future arrangements, while he himself had for his future but a few hours, and those to be passed in prison, and then to be ended miserably.

‘Let us cut this short, Pennicuck. There is nothing more of importance to be said, and such talk is painful to both of us. The boat is ready, and the men. There is a sedan at the door, so that you can get on board without being seen. Twang-hi has given orders for my—that is, for your—return to Shanghai immediately. You will do as you please about returning hither; it will be a useless as well as a troublesome matter, and I absolve you from it.’

‘I shall return as soon as it is humanly possible,’ said Pennicuck earnestly.

‘If you do so, and they have left my bones out yonder—as is their custom, I believe—put them underground, somewhere. Just take precautions that the details are not known at home. You will say, “He was executed.”’

‘You forget; here is the laudanum, Conway.’ He passed over to him the little bottle.

‘Thanks: I doubt, however, if I shall use it. It is suicide, after all, and you know I have always had my scruples.’

'If I thought you would be so weak as to let these wretches torture you, I swear I would not leave you!' cried Pennicuick. 'Even as it is, I feel like a murderer.'

'Then I ought to feel like a robber,' said Conway, smiling, 'since I take your 20,000*l.* Come, good-bye, Penn; ' and he held out his hand.

'Good-bye, Connie.'

There were real tears in Pennicuick's eyes. This man was the only friend—even to be called such—that he had ever had; and he had brought death upon him.

'I shall come back,' he continued, 'and not without hope. But if they have put you to death—then this I swear, one man at least shall pay for it. As sure as the sun is in the sky, I will kill Fu-chow.'

'Then my death will be of no service, since yours must follow.'

'Not at all. I shall take my opportunity. Nobody will ever know about it but Fu-chow himself. I will strangle that devil very slowly, and put him under water.'

'To appease my manes?' inquired Conway, with a sad smile.

But Pennicuick did not smile: his face was terrible in its fury. There was no use in reasoning with him, and besides (though at present he was unaware of that), Fu-chow was not going to be his companion any more.

The two friends grasped hands for the last time.

'You will remember, Penn, all that I have charged you with?'

'How is it possible that I should forget it?'

'Say something kind for me to my wife; and tell dear Nelly how I loved her.' He threw himself on the couch, and, with a sign that his friend should leave him, turned his face to the wall.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA

SEPTEMBER 1877.

By Prop.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SURVIVOR.

PENNICUICK left the cell, closing the door softly behind him. In the corridor he found the head gaoler waiting for him.

‘Put your cloak about your face,’ he said, ‘so as to hide your black beard. The sedan is at the door and will take you to the boat. The sooner you are on board and off, the better.’

Pennicuick understood nothing of this speech, but the gestures which accompanied it were intelligible enough. He lost no time in obeying the hint. His heart was full of sorrow for his friend, but that did not dull his wits; he felt that it behoved him to take care that Conway did not die in vain—that his own escape, that is, should be made secure.

Muffling himself in his cloak, he stepped into the sedan, with which the bearers immediately began to trot. In a few minutes he was at the garden steps that led down to the canal. He felt a cool breath that was inexpressibly grateful to him, for it was the air of freedom. Then, still using the same precautions, he entered his cabin, drew the curtains, and locked the door. At the same moment the boat began to move on its homeward journey. Peering cautiously through the window, he saw the Mandarin’s house beginning to recede, then the pine-trees on the hill behind it, then, afar off, the roof of the gaol.

The sense of humiliation was receding too, and giving place to one of exultation. If an Englishman had been with him, or had been even left behind him, cognisant of the means by which he had escaped, and with power to speak of it, it would have dashed his spirits: but no one could ever know what had really happened. He was safe and without a stain so far as the world—*his world*—

was concerned. He had still, notwithstanding the huge sum he was pledged to pay as the price of his freedom, a considerable fortune. Many years of life yet lay before him, and he would enjoy them none the less by reason of his late bitter experience.

Then his eyes rested on the vacant couch which was Conway's, and he felt a sting of reproach. Poor Connie! How different would *his* thoughts be in that infernal prison, with the shadow of that dread To-morrow hanging over him. He would take the laudanum of course when it came to the pinch—but even so, Death was Death. How beautiful looked the green earth, and the bright sky; and Conway would never see them more!

Along the roadway by the river a horseman was passing at full speed. He knew by his dress that he was a government messenger. This gave him a momentary apprehension: for his nerves were not as they had been before the Torture. He knew now why brave men had succumbed to the Rack and Screw, betrayed their fellows, or even made false accusations against them. Then appeared the Temple where he had committed the foolish outrage that had cost his friend his life, and himself a fortune. His lips framed a bitter curse, and he plunged his hand mechanically into the pocket of his jacket. His revolver, however, was in the custody of Twang-hi. He felt that it would cost him something to keep his hands quiet when Fu-chow should present himself, who was doubtless among the soldiers who were chatting together forward, behind the curtain. Dearly as he loved money, and grievously as he had been despoiled of it, he would have given a thousand pounds that moment (he said to himself) to meet Fu-chow in some desert place alone. He preferred to think of that to thinking of his friend's position; and when driven to do the latter, he avoided looking at it in its true light. He would be still in time to return and save him. He sat down, and mapped out in his mind exactly what was to be done on reaching Shanghae, so that not a moment should be lost. He would go to the Consul and the Commandant, and through their influence procure an order to stay Conway's execution, which should be sent off by express. Then he would, if possible, procure a pardon for the culprit, and also a safe conduct for himself, and armed with these would return at once, as he had promised. Though he had been so lately compelled to acknowledge to himself that Conway's doom was sealed, there had now arisen within him a ray of hope sufficient at least to make him strain every nerve to save him.

Supposing that the difficulties of the case were not absolutely insuperable, Ralph Penniciek was indeed just the man to overcome them. He was prompt and vigorous; was well acquainted

with the official and military mind, and with the scruples of each; and had no scruples of his own. Nor was he now disposed, to do him justice, to spare his purse, or endeavour to release himself from so huge an obligation. Under these circumstances Pennicwick grudged every hour spent upon the journey; fretted and fumed in the solitary cabin to which prudence still confined him; and consigned the Chinese nation to eternal perdition a thousand times a day. A thrill of vague disappointment seized him when he discovered that Fu-chow was not on board; yet he confessed to himself it was better that it should be so, since he could hardly have kept his hands off him, and to have touched him would, without doubt, have been to kill him.

In five days, thanks to incessant urging of his laborious boatmen, Pennicwick came in sight of the city. He presented himself at once at the British Consulate, and stated what had happened, substituting of course Conway's name for his own, and pleading the lightness of his offence and the severity of the threatened punishment. In half-an-hour, accompanied by the Consul, he presented himself at the door of the Governor of Shanghai, and was admitted to that great official's presence. The Mandarin listened to all he had to say with the most benignant face. 'The laws of China,' he said, 'were flawless as its ministers were incorruptible, but the highest attribute of the Emperor, the Lord of Heaven, was mercy. If the case were laid before his supreme Majesty, it was possible that something might be done.'

'But meanwhile we are losing the most precious time.'

'That is true,' said the Governor. 'But in virtue of my high office I can grant a reprieve subject to his Majesty's confirmation. You will take this yourself. I will despatch messengers on "horses of a thousand li" to Peking, and from thence the imperial reply shall be sent straight to the Mandarin at Dhulang, at whose house you will receive it.'

By this plan not an hour would be lost, and Pennicwick hastened to express his acknowledgments. The Chinese are slow at writing, but the form of reprieve was at hand, and the governor had but to sign and seal it.

'We shall save poor Conway yet,' cried Pennicwick as they left the palace.

'Let us hope so,' returned the Consul drily.

'Well, at all events the governor has shown himself anxious to do what he can: what did he mean by horses of a thousand li?'

'The horses used by the government carriers are so called; some of them will cover that distance—about 200 English miles—in a single day. These carriers carry hens' feathers to indicate their

pressing business, and everyone is bound to hasten them on their way by all means in his power.'

'I saw one myself upon the road,' mused Pennicuick. 'But why not send one of these to precede me at Dhulang with the reprieve?'

'No; don't let that document out of your sight. It is better to be a little later, and in possession of it, than to trust it to native hands. I know these people well; the Governor was too civil by half, and, what is a very bad sign, even dropped no hint about expenses.'

'Do you mean to say that he will not perform his promise?'

'No. He will do everything that costs him nothing and at the same time gives him a good character with Europeans; but, judging from his manner, I warn you not to be too hopeful.'

In a few hours after his arrival in Shanghai Pennicuick was once more departing from it, in company with two brother-officers of Conway's—Major Ross, an old campaigner, and Lieutenant Milburn, a young fellow with whom Conway was a great favourite; he had once got himself into a boyish scrape which might have been very serious but for the captain's interference. Conway was very popular in his regiment, and the news of his dangerous position had been received with the sincerest sorrow, indignation, and surprise. Of course they were all for rescuing their comrade sword in hand; England was bound to declare war with China if a hair of his head was injured; and in the mean time let the regiment march to Dhulang and claim its captain. But the Consul and even the Commandant held a different opinion. The responsibility upon the latter's shoulders was very great, and he had other things to consider than the life of one man. It was more than doubtful whether the execution even of a British officer, who had confessedly outraged the feelings of the natives and broken the law of the land, would be held as a *casus belli* by his government. Moreover, it was certain that any movement on Dhulang, supposing it were possible to reach the place with the handful of men at his disposal, would be far too late to effect its object. Even greater than the indignation of Conway's brother-officers at hearing of his position was, as I have said, their surprise; and this last feeling was a source of intense annoyance to Pennicuick; he did not like being told, as he was told a dozen times a day by his two companions, that they could not understand how a fellow like Conway could possibly have got into such 'a hole.' It was so unlike him to have played the fool under any circumstances; but knowing the Chinese character, as he did, so well, it was absolutely

unaccountable to them how he could have committed such an outrage.

'I can only tell you what occurred,' said Pennicuck doggedly. 'I suppose it was some impulse of the moment.'

'Conway is the most prudent fellow out,' answered the Major, 'and wholly without devilry.'

'I believe there has been some cursed mistake,' said Milburn; 'and if so, I hope it will be taken up at home. Nobody but a Chinese would have dreamt of harming poor old Connie; and nothing would please me better than having to go in at such brutes.'

'There I agree with you,' said Pennicuck; and he swore a terrible oath to that effect, which won him more favour with his companions than all they had yet seen of him. It was clear that he was very much in earnest to avenge Conway's fate, however it should have been brought about, and he had without doubt plenty of pluck. It was no wonder that under such circumstances, and considering his late experiences, he was somewhat stern and sombre, and unlike the man whom Conway had introduced to their society a few weeks ago; nor indeed, though they had good hopes of the success of their mission, were they themselves in good spirits. They travelled as quickly as it was possible, but the time passed wearily enough till the boat once more touched Twang-hi's garden steps. They had taken the precaution to bring with them an interpreter, and accompanied by him the three Englishmen at once stepped on shore. It was early morning, the same time or nearly so when Pennicuck had landed last there, with his friend; but on this occasion no stately major-domo came forth to greet them. The house showed no sign of welcome, and silence reigned throughout the place.

'I thought these people were astir at sunrise,' remarked the Lieutenant.

'They sleep, or seem to sleep, when it suits them,' answered Pennicuck gravely. A terrible presentiment had taken possession of him. He felt somehow that the horrible deed he had dreaded had been done, and that the Mandarin and his household, observing their arrival, kept within doors to avoid them. The gate of the court was locked, and there was no answer to their repeated summons.

'We are wasting time,' said he; 'let us go to the prison at once, and learn the worst.'

'But we can do nothing until the Mandarin has seen and countersigned the reprieve,' said the Major.

'Yea, we can learn whether the reprieve is of any service.'

His voice had a solemnity in it which chilled his companions. As for Pennicwick himself, the place in which he stood, the road which he traversed (and which was the same along which he had been hurried by the soldiers from Twang-hi's hall of justice), were like the scenes in a dream which we dream over again—vague, unstable, and yet familiar. Not a living creature was to be seen; but presently, in the middle of a waste plot of ground they saw a solitary figure standing.

‘It is a statue,’ said one.

‘It is an idol,’ suggested another.

It was, however, a dead man tied to a post.

They approached it with awe and horror; but they had still a hope that this victim to justice or barbarity might prove to be a native, for indeed such spectacles are not uncommon in China. The corpse was frightfully disfigured; it had, if not ten thousand cuts, at least many hundreds, evidently from their size inflicted by the sword of the executioner. The skin fell in flaps from the forehead over the eyes, from the cheek over the chin; the whole body was, in fact, one gaping wound. Unrecognisable, however, as were the features, it was plain that the victim had been a European.

‘Great Heaven, can this be Conway?’ groaned Milburn. They were all three deeply moved. They had turned away their faces in disgust; but the interpreter, who had no such fine feelings, was examining the body with minuteness.

‘It is an Englishman,’ observed he quietly. ‘He has suffered the “Ling-chih.” Did your friend wear rings?’

‘He had one on the second finger of his left hand,’ said Pennicwick.

‘I thought so. The executioner has cut that finger off in order to obtain the ring.’

Pennicwick turned his back on the man, and walked hastily away, accompanied by his two companions.

‘I will have blood for blood for this,’ cried he between his teeth. ‘What an end!’

‘Poor dear Connie!’ sighed the Lieutenant.

‘England will see to it,’ observed the Major gravely. ‘If ever there was a just cause for war, this is surely one.’

Pennicwick felt his face flush like fire. He understood how base he would feel if his friend's memory should be charged with such a national disaster. He pictured a war between two great nations arising from his own practical joke.

At this moment a tall figure was seen slowly coming from the direction of the Mandarin's house. He had a staff in his hand,

apparently black and white; small slips of paper were, however, pasted upon it. His attire was of hemp cloth with a tinge of yellow.

'This person,' said the interpreter, 'is a mourner.'

'Ask him if he knows who this man was whom they have murdered here,' said Pennicuick sternly.

'I know,' answered the stranger, when the question had been put. 'It is the Englishman who stole the blessed Shay-le. May Buddha forgive him!'

'What is the most insulting thing that I can say to this man?' inquired Pennicuick, when this reply had been translated to him.

'You are the dead man's friend,' continued the stranger. 'I recognise you, though my face has become strange to you through grief. He was a good man, notwithstanding the crime, which he has expiated. We burnt incense to him; we gave him money; there has been a sufficiency of rice laid at his feet every morning.'

'He means since the gentleman has been dead,' explained the interpreter.

'He had better stop, or I shall kill him,' exclaimed Pennicuick.

'Nay, nay,' interposed the Major with an angry gesture. 'Let us hear what the scoundrel has to tell us.'

'You are like a calf without a ring in his nose,' observed Kushan (for he it was), looking at Pennicuick benignly.

'I shall not translate *that*,' murmured the interpreter parenthetically.

'A toad in a well cannot perceive the whole heavens. Your ideas are contracted. To be angry with us is to be angry with Heaven. We did (I repeat) what we could for this unhappy man. My master, Twang-hi (who loved him), is overcome with sorrow, and can see no one in consequence. But there was nothing for him but to obey the commands of the lord of the province in seeing the execution carried out.'

'The man is so far right,' observed the Major, when this speech had been explained to them; 'his master's duty was to obey orders, as I trust it will be ours to hang the lord of the province, and all the rest of them.'

'When did it happen?' inquired Pennicuick, motioning towards the ghastly spectacle, to which, however, he did not venture again to turn his gaze.

Kushan shut his eyes, and assumed an attitude of consideration. 'This is the ninth day since the execution.'

'That is certainly a lie,' exclaimed the Major.

'It is the date at which the poor fellow was condemned to die,' observed Pennicuick doubtfully.

‘Then he is trying to square facts which are incompatible. I have seen men who have been killed in action, and nine days afterwards——’

‘I understand,’ interrupted Pennicuick, with a shudder.

‘Look here, Kushan; if you tell any more lies, I will kill you. When did your filthy people murder this Englishman?’

‘An upright heart does not fear demons,’ murmured Kushan, rather to bolster his own courage than with any intention of defiance, since he added immediately, ‘Perhaps the poor man perished later. Let us say eight days ago.’

‘At all events he was dead when the Governor of Shanghai issued the reprieve,’ observed Pennicuick; ‘and no doubt he knew that it would be so. What liars and hypocrites all these wretches are!’

‘Do you see yonder grove of pine-trees on the hill-side?’ inquired Kushan, in a mellifluous voice. ‘It was the desire of your departed friend to be laid there, beneath their soothing murmur.’

‘It is possible that he is now speaking the truth,’ observed Pennicuick. ‘Conway did, I remember, express some wish to that effect.’

‘Then let us lay him there,’ said the Major. ‘It is the least we can do to carry his last wish into effect, and it is all, alas! that can be done.’

Kushan, having been informed of this intention, expressed his serene approval.

‘One cannot carry an olive on the pate of a priest, but one can do something. To pay the funeral rites to those who are dear to us is one of the 1,300 meritorious deeds. In the mean time, in the name of my master, I invite you to his house while the coffin is being prepared and the grave dug.’

The three Englishmen, glad enough of any excuse for leaving the scene of so terrible a tragedy, accepted this invitation.

‘Where is Fu-chow?’ inquired Pennicuick of Kushan in his gentlest tones.

‘Fu-chow—Fu-chow?’ echoed the major-domo, striking his smooth forehead. ‘Ah, I remember; he was the officer in command of your guard of soldiers. Did he not return with you to Shanghai?’

‘No, he did not,’ answered Pennicuick. ‘If he could be persuaded to do so—that is, to return with us now—I would pay a handsome sum to the person who brought about such an arrangement.’

‘Ah, you miss him:’ remarked Kushan blandly. ‘It is unhappily, however, useless to climb trees in search of fishes. If he did not return with you, I don’t know what became of him. China is

very large: if a man slips away, he is gone for ever. Here is my master's house. Please to walk towards the dining-chamber. You will find chickens and goat's flesh, with a steak of the water-ox.'

It was a gloomy meal, and the guests had but small appetite for the dainties that were set before them. Kushan, who presided at the board, delivered himself of innumerable aphorisms, mostly of a lugubrious kind, to which, however, nobody listened. The two officers conversed together in a low tone concerning their dead friend. Pennicuck sat silent, full of sorrow, and rage, and self-reproach.

It was felt by everybody to be a relief when an attendant appeared to summon them to the funeral. This would have taken place on that very day, even if the Englishmen had not arrived, so that all preparations had been made for it.

Only, as the payment of expenses was now assured, the proceedings were of a more ambitious character. A life-size figure made of bamboo and covered with red paper, like a military Guy Faux, was carried by the two leading members of the procession, to indicate the calling of the deceased; this was intended to be consumed beside the grave. Next came two men with large white lanterns, on one of which was inscribed 'a hundred children,' on the other 'a thousand grandchildren,' in compliment to the dead man's supposed descendants. Next, was a band of music playing solemn airs. Then came men scattering mock money—white and yellow bits of tin with holes through them—to open the road, *i.e.* to propitiate the spirits who might be guarding the way to Heaven. And last the coffin, varnished, and adorned with red paper.

The absurdity of these arrangements increased rather than detracted from the melancholy of the three mourners. It seemed an additional calamity that to their unhappy friend could be given neither a military burial, nor the simple rites of home; these foolish gewgaws which were intended to do him honour appeared to be an insult to his memory. But there was no time for any alteration in the matter, even if it could have been satisfactorily effected.

When the coffin was put into the grave young Milburn handed something to his superior with a blush at his own kindly foresight. It was an English prayer-book. The Major nodded approval, and read from it the service for the dead. When the grave had been filled in, Kushan stepped forward and inquired whether anything else could be done. His plausible and unctuous manner resembled greatly that of an undertaker at home, but his attire was different; he had exchanged his hempen garment for a silk one of brightest yellow.

'Put up a headstone with that name upon it,' said Pennicuck,

handing him a slip of paper. 'What is it in all in which I shall then be indebted to you?'

Kushan named a sum which must have been certainly sufficient for all expenses, and Pennicuick paid it without a word.

'Shall I now conduct these honourable personages to their boat?' inquired Kushan, through the interpreter.

'Not yet,' said Pennicuick. 'I wish first to visit the prison.'

Kushan turned up the whites of his eyes. 'Houses are emptiness,' he said, 'when they have been exchanged for the lonely mound outside the city wall.'

Nevertheless he led the way to the gaol.

They once more passed by the spot, where the post now stood without its ghastly burden; and on this occasion they took notice how the ground and turf had been lately trodden down, as if by a great multitude.

'There were 50,000 persons to witness the "Ling-chih,"' explained Kushan, in answer to the Major's inquiry.

The governor of the gaol received them with great urbanity. Pennicuick's quick eye detected on this man's finger, not only his own signet-ring, but that of his deceased friend; but upon the whole he judged it better to utter no remonstrance.

It was not expedient to make this personage his enemy who, though he did not know his power over him, held a secret in his hands the betrayal of which would have been his social ruin. In even speaking with him, in fact, he ran a great risk, but his prudence was overborne by a certain insatiable curiosity. He wished to know whether his unhappy friend had taken advantage of the means in his possession to obtain a painless death, or whether he had really undergone the agonies of the torture.

That the execution had taken place proved nothing; since that would have happened—in order to deceive the public—had the victim been dead or alive. It was necessary to proceed with caution in his inquiries.

'Did my friend leave any message behind him?' asked Pennicuick.

'He left nothing but his clothes,' was the reply: 'they have passed into the legal possession of Sheer Sing, the turnkey, who is now wearing them: he might nevertheless, however, be persuaded to give them up.'

Pennicuick shook his head, with a gesture of disgust. He felt his fury rising against this man, who had been the cause of a frightful humiliation being inflicted upon him. 'I perceive he also left his ring,' said he sternly.

'Yes. He gave it to me as they led him forth to death,' re-

plied the gaoler with imperturbable face, 'as a testimony to my kindness towards him. I would never part with such a memento—unless for a very considerable consideration.'

'How much?' inquired Pennicuick.

The gaoler named a sum greatly in excess of the value of the trinket; Pennicuick at once produced the money, and received the article in exchange.

'Perhaps you would like to buy back your own ring also?' said the gaoler persuasively; 'it is of greater cost, and has also memories of a tender nature connected with it. The regard I entertain for yourself is very genuine.'

'You may keep it, and—and welcome,' said Pennicuick, swallowing his wrath with a great effort.

'As you please,' answered the other gravely. 'By the by, there was a little bottle found in your friend's chamber, full of some dark liquid, and untouched. It is perhaps a cordial.'

'You and Sheer Sing can drink that between you,' said Pennicuick quietly. 'Now answer me this question truly; did my poor friend suffer much? or were those precautions taken about which he spoke to you?'

'Those precautions were taken,' answered the gaoler; 'it is very well you spoke of them, for I paid the executioner two taels out of my own pocket for that purpose, which had escaped my memory. It was well earned, too; your man was dead in a second, I do assure you.'

Pennicuick gave him the money as before, then turned upon his heel without a word.

'Let us go,' said he to his companions. 'This fellow makes me sick.'

'You have been paying through the nose, as it seems to me, for everything,' observed the Major, as they retraced their steps.

'No doubt. They are all cheats as well as murderers. But what do a few pounds matter more or less? I would have given five hundred to learn what that scoundrel just told me, that Conway did not suffer pain.'

'This man is a good fellow, after all,' observed the Major to Milburn presently, in a low tone.

'I am not sure,' answered the young man doubtfully. 'He has a cold-blooded way with him, and gives me the idea of wishing to get the whole affair out of his mind.'

'Gad, I can't blame him for that,' said the Major, with a shudder.

Kushan took leave of his three visitors at the boat-side with a stately salaam to each.

To Milburn he said, 'Youth is vanity.'

To the Major he said, 'Reform yourself, that you may reform others.'

To Pennicuick he said, 'May you and your whole family be jammed into one coffin!'

As all these remarks were accompanied by the same sweet smile, and the interpreter was already on board, they did not produce any particular effect.

All were sombre and silent throughout the voyage; but Pennicuick hardly uttered a word. The two officers were thinking of their dead friend's fate, and of what steps it was probable would be taken to avenge it; Pennicuick, too, thought of these things, but also of others. It was difficult to move him from what appeared to be a species of lethargy; but he was roused from it on one occasion.

'I suppose,' said the Major, as the three sat smoking together on the morning of the day they reached Shanghai, 'that our poor friend has not left much behind him in the way of money.'

'Sir?' said Pennicuick; 'I beg your pardon. You were saying——'

'I was referring to what Conway may have had to leave behind him. I am afraid it will not be much.'

'Just so; I dare say,' answered Pennicuick abstractedly.

The Major stared at him.

'We thought you would know all about it,' explained Milburn simply. 'Conway has spoken to me about his family more than once. He has only one daughter; let us hope he has been at least enabled to provide for her.'

'Yes, indeed; let us hope that,' said Pennicuick. 'One cannot know anything for certain, however, just at present.'

And he again relapsed into silence.

'Now, if I were a rich man like that fellow,' observed the Lieutenant presently to the Major, 'I would take care that my friend's only daughter should not be unprovided for in any way.'

'My dear boy,' answered the Major, 'you think that because you are not a rich man. If you had as much money to spend as Pennicuick, you would perhaps be as close-fisted.'

'He paid everything very handsomely up yonder, however,' remarked Milburn.

'But how do you know he won't deduct it out of Conway's little property? It is my opinion—taking everything I have seen of him one with another—that he is a deuced hard lot.'

'I'm glad he isn't in the regiment,' answered the Lieutenant, with a glance of great disfavour at the subject of these remarks.

Whether Pennicuick was a hard lot or not, he certainly did not deserve the imputation of intending to charge his friend's estate with the money he had just expended on his account. He was quite ready to pay that, and would have been so had it been thrice as much. But what he *was* thinking of, with his hand resting on his breast pocket in which lay his dead friend's will, was whether 20,000*l.* was not too large a sum to pay away without a scrap of paper being in existence to compel him to do so—and when even the verbal promise he had given to that effect had been passed to a dead man. He had been thinking over the matter for four days, and it was now become necessary to make up his mind about it one way or the other. The question that had just been put to him—‘What has Conway left behind him?’—would be put again by others, and would have to be answered definitely. In that case, which reply should he give, ‘He has left 20,000*l.*,’ or, ‘He has left next to nothing’?

CHAPTER XVIII.

UNCONSCIOUS.

LINCOLN'S INN, although it doubtless has its merits, is, viewed as a dwelling-place, not an enticing spot. Its chambers have, to my eye at least, an aspect especially unliveable. That they are good to read in, good to write in, good to make money in, I do not dispute; but I would rather not sleep in them nor eat in them. When the day's work is over, it is well to leave them, and breathe a little fresh air. They are a part of the necessary toil and moil of life, but by no means of its cheerful serenity. They are dull without being quiet (for the thunder of Chancery Lane ever booms above them), and their look-out is for the most part melancholy and devoid of interest. There are trees, indeed, of goodly height—a whole avenue of them, leading from wall to wall, in a most disappointing manner: and there is one large grass-plot, which has, however, the air of a drying-green that attempts to be ornamental. On this abuts Stone Buildings, which may therefore lay claim to command foliage and verdure. But it is not a cheerful block of residences, nor would one's sense of the fitness of things be outraged if one were told it was a workhouse or a barrack. Nevertheless, if I must needs live in Lincoln's Inn, I would live in Stone Buildings, where a first floor is as highly rented, I suppose, as any twenty-roomed house in the suburbs with a garden and a double coach-house. In this ‘dusky purlieu of the law,’ though by no means on the first floor, lived or ‘kept’ (for he was young enough to retain his university phrases) Raymond Pennicuick. He had a

large sitting-room looking down on the green, a bed-room, a clerk's room, and a very small nondescript apartment, so wretched and rayless that it seemed appropriate for suicidal purposes and nothing else. The furniture of this suite, which had been passed on, from inmate to inmate, so long, that it might have served the student days of the Lord Chancellor, was mouldy and moth-eaten, and looked all the worse from its contrast with the articles of modern luxury Raymond had brought with him from his college rooms. The easy chair, the fire-screen (a triumph of Nelly's skill in needlework) and the volumes of Thackeray and Dickens were like new cloth patched on an old garment, and he himself in his youth and comeliness looked the brightest patch of all. It was small matter to him that the carpet was worn and that the rugs bore the marks of coals both hot and cold; or that when his gaze through the open window left the elms and the grass, it had nothing but chimney-pots to rest upon. When one is young, unless one is a very exceptional sort of fool, the mind is not affected by furniture; and the look-out from one's windows is of small importance, when, beyond it, the world is lying before us.

Raymond Pennicuick, therefore, had no grudge against his father for having placed him in this dreary spot; he had, indeed, only murmured against the parental fiat on one occasion, when it had removed him from college before his time. He had, it is true, been by no means studious, and would certainly not have distinguished himself in the honour list; but he would have taken his ordinary degree, like other young men in his own 'set,' and he had not been told that more was expected of him. Yet his father had removed him suddenly from his college joys, protesting that he had wasted time enough, and must now buckle to the business of life. The real reason of this was unknown to the young fellow, though it had lain quite on the surface; a run of ill luck on the turf had for the time made money scarce with his father, and by way of retrenchment he had withdrawn his son from the university, the educational advantages of which, let us charitably add, he did not perhaps very highly estimate. It was very unusual with him to lose, for he was a book-maker, and always stood to win; but on this occasion a certain nobleman who had long been an ornament of the sporting world, and who was Pennicuick's principal debtor, had levanted. The most prudent mind cannot guard against a catastrophe of this kind, which for some months compelled Ralph Pennicuick to lodge under the same roof with his son. He need not have done so, of course, since he could have procured any amount of money; but it was one of his caprices—he called it 'a principle'—never to borrow a shilling, or spend one above his in-

come. For a time Raymond rather resented this abrupt separation from his university friends, but in London there are compensations to be found for most things by a genial young fellow of position. He was even more content when his father placed him in the chambers at Stone Buildings, and himself retired to the agreeable privacy of the Albany. There had not been the least disagreement between them; Raymond's sense of duty was too strong for that; but he had felt himself *de trop*, like a boy who is forced to remain with his seniors after dinner, when the ladies have gone into the drawing-room.

'Youth and age,' the poet tells us, 'cannot live together:' but the reasons he gives were by no means those which disinclined Ralph Pennicuick to live in lodgings with his son. If there was no absolute 'incompatibility of disposition,' such as nowadays so often sunders husbands and wives, they had few ideas in common.

Ralph Pennicuick hated argument—that is, any expression of opinion contrary to his own; and therefore, since Raymond was quite incapable of hypocrisy, he had often to remain silent. Similarly, in writing to his father, he was aware that no distasteful topic must be broached; a knowledge that tends to make correspondence brief, though not always easy.

Unhappily, it had become necessary to Raymond to break through his usual rule. He had ventured to address his father upon a subject which would certainly not find favour in his eyes, and the letter had been posted, and was now on its way. Upon the contents of it, and on the manner in which they were likely to be received, Raymond was now thinking, as he sat alone in his chambers smoking his after-breakfast cigar. He did not, like other young men of his day, smoke pipes in preference; in which respect, as in a few others, he showed himself his father's son. He had a natural taste for what was most expensive, though without the vulgarity of liking things because they were dear.

'What will he say—what will he do—when he gets my letter?' were the thoughts in his mind, as he sat at the open window watching the clouds above the elm-trees and listening to the chirps of the sparrows. 'If Nelly will have me, I will marry her, whatever he does or says, that's certain.' Here again he was his father's son. 'But without his consent it will be difficult to obtain hers. She is so unselfish that she will never see the matter in its true light; her very love for me—sweet heart!—will prevent it.' He rose and paced the room, with a glow upon his handsome face; he was recalling his last interview with her in the garden at Richmond. Presently his eye wandered to the dusty rows of law books that lined one side of the apartment. 'If I had but expectations,'

muttered he, 'if there was an entail which I could cut off, and so render him a service, I might win him over. But I have nothing—no plea to urge with him, except that my happiness is wrapt up in her: and there he will not believe me.' He did not say, 'and he will care nothing for that,' which some sons would have said, and which would in his case have been no more than the truth. Even in his bitterness, his sense of filial duty restrained his tongue.

In this, Raymond Pennicwick's disposition was peculiar. There are many men who have a keen sense of filial and fraternal respect, and who have even a strong regard for their more distant relatives (quite independent of their merits), and who, with all this, have scarcely any affection in them. It is doubtful, indeed, whether this devotion to their own family does not arise from egotism. Fathers and brothers are dear to such men because they are of their own blood, and as it were a part of themselves. The dearness is literally of the heart—or rather, of the arteries. It is an anatomical attachment. Their love, if they boast of such a possession at all, is self-love. It is scarcely going too far to say that—with the exception of his love for his mother—a man's power of loving is in inverse ratio to his devotion to his elder and contemporaneous relatives. The more 'clannish' people are, the less they have, generally, of geniality, friendship, and general benevolence. But with Raymond this was not so. He had the 'piety' of the ancients as well as the kindness of the moderns. If he did not absolutely love his father, he did his best to do so, and persuaded himself that he had succeeded; and, if he found it impossible to respect him, he at least respected his authority. And notwithstanding this, a more generous and affectionate young fellow than Raymond did not exist. His heart and his conscience were alike tender. He had not, indeed, much cleverness; he had probably never uttered 'a good thing' intentionally in all his life. But he had said very many pleasant things, which go much farther towards making a man popular. His popularity had had one effect, which, had he known of it, would have given him genuine pain; it set people contrasting him with his father, much to the latter's disadvantage. Everybody said how ill Ralph the elder behaved to Raymond the younger; how short of money he kept him; what little natural affection he showed for him; and generally, how much better a son he had in Raymond than he deserved. The young man knew that his father was disliked and feared much more than he was admired; but he did his best to counteract this feeling; no one had ever heard him complain of the manner in which he had been treated; and when any opportunity for praise of his father was offered to him, he never failed to take advantage of it. It was not his fault that it so often sounded like apology.

For his own part, he had avoided all causes of offence with him, and bowed to his every wish, even to his caprices. But now a cause of offence had come which could not be avoided. He did not repent that he had sent his letter asking permission to offer his hand where his affections had been already bestowed, but he was full of misgivings about its reception. He was not afraid of the effects of his father's anger, as most sons in his position would have been afraid; he did not dread disinherittance, the cutting off of the supplies, &c., but he feared the anger itself, not as a coward would have done, but as one who fears a quarrel because of his regard for his antagonist.

'I am very young,' he had written, 'to urge anything counter to your wishes, as I apprehend this request may be; but my heart is set upon the matter, and will not be moved. Neither Nelly nor I are extravagant in our tastes; a small income will suffice for us: not more to begin with, perhaps, than the sum you are at present so good as to allow me. With such an incentive to exertion I shall set to work at my profession in earnest, and trust not to be a burden to you.'

If he had known that in a few months the 200*l.* a year to which he had alluded would become his own, he would, of course, have worded his communication differently; but the tone would have been the same. No sense of independence would have made him undutiful. Upon the whole the letter was very simple, honest, and dignified; though it unconsciously betrayed the fact that he was aware of his father's selfishness. He knew that he should be reproached with his youth, inexperience, ignorance of his own mind, &c.; but that the real objection to his plan would lie in its being expensive. His father had always insisted upon the importance of a young fellow's becoming independent; and had, moreover, pointed out that the best and shortest way of accomplishing this desirable object was to marry an heiress. If Ralph Pennicwick's morality was not of any high type, he could not at least be accused of hypocrisy.

It was nearly a week since Raymond had called upon Mrs. Conway and her daughter, which was a longer time than he had ever suffered to elapse between his former visits; he had felt a little sensitive about Nelly's reception of him on that occasion, and still more embarrassment as to the position in which he now stood as her avowed yet unaccepted lover; but he meant to go down to Richmond that very day. The longer he was away, the more awkward, he felt, would be their next meeting; and besides, it was his greatest happiness in life to be with her. It was arranged that, pending his father's decision, they were to be as

brother and sister; and though that was not the relationship he most desired, it was a very agreeable one. He was not of those unhappy persons who can enjoy nothing unless they get all they want; and he would have been very willing indeed to make the most of his opportunities before any decided veto could arrive from his father, but for Nelly's sake. He felt that it would be wrong to irrevocably engage her affections unless marriage were to follow; and he was sure that she would be resolute against it, if his father's consent were not obtained.

Still, as he left his chambers in his summer garb, and with a flower in his button-hole, there was a radiance in his face that only a certain tender expectancy can bestow, and which is very different from the smirk of satisfaction that sits upon us in later life, when we are about to make a *coup* in the City: it contrasted strongly with the expression usually worn by the inmates of Stone Buildings, and especially with that upon the face of his fellow-lodger, Beaumont, whom he happened to meet upon the stairs. They were merely acquaintances, though they lived under the same roof, and were almost contemporaries. Beaumont read much harder; he reported legal cases for the papers; and he took to his profession kindly, which could not quite be said of Pennicwick.

'Hullo, Beaumont! you look as if the Long Vacation were done away with. There has nothing gone wrong with you, I hope.'

'No, nothing. You are playing the truant early; you have not even read the newspaper yet, I'll warrant.'

'I have read all that is interesting in it; that is, your admirable reports. The weather is too fine for work, and I am off—somewhere up the river.'

It was a proof of the seriousness of his intentions with respect to Nelly that he did not say to Richmond. Even the young do not wear their hearts upon their sleeves when there is a conjunction of hearts. He ran down-stairs with a merry laugh; but Beaumont, as he leant over the banisters watching him, grew graver than before.

'He has not seen it,' he muttered, 'and I have not the pluck to tell him.'

As Raymond stepped across the court to Chancery Lane, where there are always cabs to be found, he came upon two men, who stopped their talk at his approach. One he knew just enough to nod to him. When he had passed by, this one said to his companion, 'That is the son of the very man in question.'

'Why, he looks more as if he were going courting than as if—'

'Hush! It is evident he knows nothing about it, poor devil'

'Waterloo Station!—Richmond line!' cried Raymond.

CHAPTER XIX.

BREAKING IT.

IF it is true that one's ears burn while others are talking of us in our absence, Raymond Pennicuick's ears ought to have been very red upon his road to Richmond that morning. And, curiously enough, those who were talking of him were the very folks he was about to visit.

When Mrs. Conway and her daughter came down to breakfast, the latter, as usual, had made the tea, while the former had taken up the paper. She was fond of news of all kinds, and it was one of her very few pieces of personal extravagance to have the 'Times' 'to read' for the first two hours every day. Under such circumstances, it was only reasonable that during that interval she should read it all, and get her money's worth out of it. She was one of those terrible people who *will* read their newspapers aloud, and poor Nelly had to listen to her. First came the Births, Deaths, and Marriages, to which the young lady did not object—the female mind (perhaps from the earliest ages) takes an interest in the 'Hatch, Match, and Despatch' of its fellow-creatures—and then the general news of all descriptions, beginning with the Royal Family's walking on the slopes. But there was sometimes a pause between the extracts from the supplement and those from the main body of the paper. This, as Nelly was well aware, was when there was news from China, which her mother always ignored, as not having any interest for her, but somewhat inconsistently always read to herself before everything else.

On this occasion, however, Mrs. Conway did not make this exception. 'Good Heavens!' she cried aloud in a voice that made her daughter utter also a little cry; 'Ralph Pennicuick is dead!'

'Oh, mamma, how shocking!' exclaimed Nelly; 'let us hope it is not true.'

'Yes, it is true; see here.' Her fat hands trembled with such excitement that Nelly had to take the paper from her to read the statement.

'By telegraph. Hong Kong, May 4.—English officer named Pennicook has been put to death by the Chinese in the province of Keangsoo. His companion has arrived at Shanghae.'

'It says "Pennicook,"' said Nelly faintly.

'That is a mistake, of course, in the telegram, as also the word officer. It is Ralph Pennicuick, no doubt. Thank God, your father's safe.'

This was the first time that Mrs. Conway had ever suffered herself to be surprised into any expression of solicitude upon her husband's account, and she evidently regretted it as soon as it was uttered.

'It was very thoughtless and selfish of him to go with such a companion on such a journey. You see it says "put to death"—that is, by law. No doubt the man did something that roused the anger of the natives.'

'Oh, mamma, what does it signify? is it not enough that they have killed him? We cannot be sure, however, that such a catastrophe has happened. There is no telegraph between Shanghai and Hong Kong, and this may be a mere rumour. As you say, however, thank God dear papa is safe.'

'No doubt he is safe enough,' replied Mrs. Conway, adding something in an undertone, which Nelly did not or would not catch, about 'nought never coming to harm.'

'How terribly this will shock poor Ray!' sighed Nelly, with a little outburst of tears; she was glad to weep on Raymond's account, since she could not do so upon his father's. 'He was always such a good son.'

'I have known good sons who were not worth much in other respects,' observed Mrs. Conway, still repentant of her tenderness. 'However, we shall soon see what he is made of. He will be his own master now.'

'And very sorry he will be that it is so,' observed Nelly.

'No doubt he will—for a day or two. That will be only decent. I am not so interested, however, in his filial feelings as I am as to whether he will keep his promise or not.'

'What promise, mamma?'

'Well, it may not be exactly a promise: but it was only a week ago, I believe, that he asked you to be his wife.'

'And I refused him, mamma. Raymond is quite free to do as he pleases. But how can you think of such things with such news as this before you? Poor Mr. Pennicnick murdered, perhaps tortured, by those dreadful people! I feel as if it were a judgment upon us for what was said the other day about people "not troubling themselves to come home."'

'As I said it, my dear,' answered Mrs. Conway drily, 'the judgment, as you call it, has, I suppose, fallen upon me. And, thank goodness, I have strength to bear it.'

There was something in Mrs. Conway's manner not only callous and cruel, but, as it seemed to Nelly, almost triumphant in its malice. She could not restrain a shudder as she listened to her.

'I am sorry to shock you so, my dear,' continued Mrs. Conway quietly. 'I dare say I appear very unfeeling. However, since I

am your mother, try to persuade yourself that I may have some good reasons for not making myself unhappy because this man is dead. Of course I am sorry that it has happened in this way; but I do not pretend to be sorry that it has happened. It is better for everybody, especially for his son, who has hitherto been his slave; he will now obtain his freedom.'

'At a great price,' sighed Nelly. It seemed to her a terrible thing that a son should be made happy by his father's death; and yet she was aware that this would in some measure come to pass in the present instance.

Her mother rose, and, patting her softly on the head, said tenderly, 'You are a good girl, my darling, too good for this world, or at all events for any man in it. Dry your eyes and eat your breakfast.' Then she left the room, leaving her own meal untasted.

Once in the passage, and beyond the observation of her daughter, Mrs. Conway's face grew not only grave but pained. This was not from distress of mind, however, but of body. She leant against the wall with her hand upon her side, and uttered a low groan. 'This must not kill me,' murmured she to herself. 'I must get over it somehow, or he will have the better of me yet. Tortures! he could not have suffered worse than I have done during the last five minutes. It is the heart, no doubt. It would be curious indeed if I should die "heart-broken" upon *his* account.'

She looked up at the stairs, which were steep for so old-fashioned a house, and shook her head. Then she moved very slowly and without noise into a room on the same floor at the back of the breakfast-room, and separated from it by folding-doors.

Her face expressed the anxiety of a person who has a wound in some vital part, which has been stanchcd insecurely, and who is afraid of its bleeding afresh. Like most women—which, poor souls, is fortunate for them—she had a capacity for bearing pain. She could be as secretive about it as the Spartan boy with his fox; but it sometimes betrayed itself by 'temper.'

'The doctor said "perfect rest,"' she murmured; 'I will lie down here.' She placed herself cautiously upon the sofa, and remained there without movement. Presently her face became calm, and her lips began to move without sound slowly. You would have said she was some good woman at her prayers. She was not praying, but going through a certain scene in her mind that had occurred in her previous life, and which had indeed a sort of prayer for its conclusion. Could you have understood such silent speech (as the deaf and dumb do), her last words would have run thus: 'Dead, dead in his sins. May God forgive him as I do!'

Nelly, quite unconscious of her mother's propinquity, remained meanwhile in the front room. She had obeyed the mandate as to drying her eyes, but not that as to eating her breakfast. She felt as if a morsel of bread would have choked her. Her sorrow for what had happened was very genuine, though it was not for the chief sufferer's sake at all. She was horrified that a man like Pennicwick, vicious and heartless as she understood him to be, should have been thus suddenly cut off from life. She was not naturally conventional, and that she took in this instance a conventional view was proof how little her feelings were really concerned. Under ordinary circumstances no one was quicker than herself to perceive the absurdity of such phrases as 'hurried before the judgment-seat of Heaven,' 'cut off in his sins,' &c., &c., as though his Maker were unable to take the circumstances of a man's death into account. But now she took refuge in these common-places. It was less painful to her to let her thoughts dwell upon the dead man than upon his son, because of the latter's relations with herself; but they did revert to him, nevertheless, and to herself in connection with him. She strove in vain to shut out from her view that he was now in a position to offer his hand to her with a certainty of its being accepted. She had no doubts of his good faith whatever; she knew that he had in fact plighted it to her, notwithstanding what she had said to her mother about his being a free man; but she felt that with this news of death no such anticipation of bliss should mingle. Through the gloom of these tidings, however, there glinted in upon her bright streaks of light; thoughts of herself as Raymond's wife, of her mother's satisfaction and comfort, and of her father's return to England, which might now—since he would be relieved of all expenses upon her account—be looked upon as certain. Even when those die who are near to us, thoughts of personal advantage will thus intrude; how much more, then, when we desire benefit from the removal from the world of those to whom we are indifferent.

It was Nelly's practice after breakfast to repair to her easel, which stood in a little room opening from her own bed-chamber and dignified by her mother by the title of 'the studio;' but this morning she remained below stairs, with a book in her hand—which she did not read—and with the fatal newspaper on her knees. She had known Mr. Pennicwick as a child knows her father's friend who is not her own friend. She had had a vague dislike and distrust of him, either instinctive, or engendered by her mother's views of the man, but she had never hated him—his relationship to Raymond, if not his intimacy with her father, had forbidden that—nor did she fear him, for it was not in her nature

to fear. Others there were, however, as she was well aware, who feared him; and, mingled with her horror at what had happened, she experienced a sort of wonder (which would have flattered him) that so masterful a man should so ignobly perish—should have been put to death by such despicable creatures as she understood the Chinese to be.

She was still plunged in these conflicting and uncanny thoughts, when a footstep that she well knew was heard on the flags outside; the little gate swung back upon its hinges, pushed by an impatient hand, and then the visitor sprang up the steps of the front door. There was no need for her to look out of window. It was Raymond Pennicnick—come to tell her of the misfortune that had befallen him. That would have been bad enough. But when she heard his eager voice, inquiring whether they were at home, she knew that a worse thing awaited her. He did not as yet know what had happened, and she would have to tell him. Her mother from the next apartment heard him likewise, and drew the same conclusion. It was hard on her daughter that she should be left to break such news, but she felt herself to be physically unequal to such a task, or even to move from her present position. There was nothing for her but to lie where she was—and listen; for every word spoken aloud in the next room was audible.

‘Why, Nelly dear, this *is* a happy chance! I thought by this hour you would have been engaged on some immortal work upstairs, and that the greatest interest would be necessary to gain speech with you. But, what is the matter?’

‘Nothing, Ray—at least, there is——’ she cast her eyes down at the newspaper, in hopes that he would guess that it was there her sorrow lay; but he quite misunderstood the cause of her gravity.

‘I am afraid you are still annoyed with me, Nelly; you are apprehensive I shall resume the subject upon which I spoke to you last week. You need not fear it. I have written to my father to express my fixed intentions regarding you. I have said my happiness is only to be found in your love. But in the mean time, we are to be as brother and sister. Is it not so?’ He spoke with such volubility that she had not the power to interrupt him. The very pitifulness in her sweet face doubtless led him on.

‘You must not reckon upon your father, dear Raymond, she faltered out, ‘for anything; for alas! you have no father.’

‘Ah, that comes from your mother’s view of him,’ replied he impatiently; ‘she thinks the governor an unnatural parent, which would be rather hard lines upon him, if he were affected by it. She believes he thinks too much of No. 1, but who doesn’t? He has, no doubt, a will of his own; but it is not immutable; and

if anybody can move it, it will be surely you. I think if he saw you pleading for us——'

'You do not understand, dear Raymond; your father will never see either of us again; at least, if this report be true—which may not be the case——' here she put the newspaper into his hand; 'there is still a hope that it may be mere rumour: and the Chinese news ——'

'Good God!' exclaimed Raymond in a low suppressed tone. He had read the telegram, and stood like one transfixed. 'My poor, poor father!'

Nelly had run to the sideboard, and from the cellaret produced a glass of sherry. Some girls would have sought to comfort their lover in another way, and dearly would she have liked to do so; but would not that have been to take advantage of him for her own benefit? She could let him see how sorry she was for him without that.

'There is no telegraph, Raymond, from Shanghae, whence this report has come, to Hong Kong: there is an error as to your father's name and profession, and the whole thing may be therefore a mistake.' She did not think it was, but she knew that such an idea would help to break the blow to him.

'It is possible,' said Raymond slowly; 'yet I feel the news is true. What does your mother think about it? I should have more confidence in her judgment than in my own in such a case.'

While they still stood together, but not touching one another—he had put his arm half round her waist and then withdrawn it, because to be happy at such a moment seemed a sin to him—Mrs. Conway entered.

'This is a bad blow to you, my dear Raymond,' said she softly.

He took her hand, but without his usual cordiality. Though he had expressed a wish for her opinion, her presence was, in fact, unwelcome to him, for had she not been his father's foe?

'I feel it, Mrs. Conway, very deeply.'

'I am sure you do, because you are a good son.' She felt she was paying a compliment to him at the expense of the dead man: but she could think of nothing more appropriate to say: she was a woman who never told a lie to mitigate matters, though she had, at least on one occasion in her life, omitted for that reason to tell the truth.

'You have nothing to reproach yourself with for your conduct to your father, which is what few sons can say.'

'I am thinking of him, and not of myself,' replied Raymond

coldly. 'What is your opinion about this telegram? Do you think it is really true?'

'I am afraid it is so. At least, I have no reason to doubt it.'

'But the thing may be exaggerated; my father may have got into trouble with the natives, and be in prison, and yet not——' he hesitated—he could not say, 'and yet not dead.'

'The telegram says, "His companion has arrived at Shanghae," observed Mrs. Conway gravely; 'my husband would never have left him in such a plight as you suggest.'

There was neither pride nor affection in her tone; but she spoke as one who is stating an undeniable fact: and yet she seemed to repent of having even thus far borne witness to her husband's virtues, for she added significantly, 'No one ever accused Arthur Conway of not sticking to his *friends*.'

Nelly knew very well that this remark had a suppressed antithesis with respect to her mother herself, and she showed her consciousness of it by a pained look.

Raymond only understood that a hope had been rudely dispelled.

'I think I will go home,' said he, rising slowly from his seat.

'I should have thought you would have found more comfort here, Raymond, among your old friends, at a time like this,' observed Mrs. Conway reproachfully, 'than in your solitary chambers.'

Raymond shook his head, and, looking mechanically towards Nelly, answered sadly,

'You are right, Mrs. Conway; but I am right too. I shall go back to town, and telegraph to Hong Kong at once for confirmation or otherwise of this evil news. In the mean time, God bless you both!'

He shook hands cordially with the women, and in the same way with each. There was a lingering pressure of the fingers (usual with him in Nelly's case), that is the hall-mark of Love, and distinguishes it from that other precious metal, Friendship; but his thoughts were (or he strove his best to keep them so) upon his father's unhappy fate, and his own bereavement.

'There must have been something good about Mr. Pennicwick, after all,' observed Nelly, when the young man had gone, 'or his loss would not excite such genuine sorrow even in a son.'

'Robespierre had a brother, who wept when he was guillotined,' answered Mrs. Conway. 'And besides, Raymond mourns because it is his duty to do so.'

CHAPTER XX.

VICE VERSÁ.

WHEN Raymond got back to London, he found the town alive to the misfortune that had happened to him. 'Outrage on an Englishman in China;' 'An English gentleman put to death by the Chinese;' 'A *casus belli* with China,' formed the great attraction of the contents of the day's papers, and was posted up on the boardings, and exposed in the largest print at the corners of the streets. He averted his eyes from these advertisements of his sorrow as much as he could, and yet they had a certain fascination for him; nor could he resist buying an evening paper, which promised 'further particulars' of the catastrophe. He took it up with him to his chambers, and opened it with a feverish expectation he could scarcely have explained. It was to the last degree improbable that any such details could have come to hand; nor was any newspaper editor likely to be a better judge of the authenticity of the telegram than the Conways or himself. The journal in question, however, took the truth of the news for granted, and merely used it as a peg whereon to hang one of those social or personal paragraphs which are now so common. 'The lamented and untimely fate of our fellow-countryman in China' was the excuse for half a column of biography. There were very few facts in it, but the mistake as to the victim being a military man was corrected. He was spoken of as being well-known in Club circles, and as having at one time given promise of a political career. His abilities were described as 'remarkable,' and, of course, he was 'universally respected.' He had left behind him a son, who was still a minor, but who would succeed to the very considerable property of the deceased.

That last sentence gave a pang to the heir, which would probably have been incomprehensible to the man who wrote it. 'I am rich, I am free to marry the girl of my choice,' thought Raymond, 'thanks to the murderers of my father.' He had no doubt that 'the natives' had killed him—probably in some barbarous and shocking fashion—without the pretence of justice.

When Beaumont came up that evening to condole with him on his loss, Raymond felt that it was in fact to congratulate him. The advantages he derived from his father's misfortune were, for the time, almost abhorrent to him. This did not arise from remorse—from his ever having speculated upon such an event in his own mind—but it did partly arise from the circumstance that others had so speculated. He knew that Mrs. Conway had—for one: the pity

that she had often expressed for him by reason of his father's neglect, or of his niggardliness with respect to money, recurred to him now with exceeding bitterness. He was one of that rare class who, however they have knocked about in the world, retain their sensitiveness.

He had sent a telegram to his father's bankers at Hong Kong, demanding an immediate reply; but he did not know when that might be expected; nor did he entertain much hope of its contradicting the previous despatch in any important particular. There was nothing for him but to sit at home and wait.

In the mean time, he was not without visitors. Many came to see him in his trouble; in part, perhaps, because it was of that sort which ends in material prosperity, but not a few out of genuine regard, for Raymond was very popular. Among others came the family lawyer, whom, since his errand was one of business, he received with but scanty welcome. In talking of his late father's affairs, he experienced much the same feeling as he would have done in taking his father's purse from his pocket after death: nay, it was even worse, since he was not certain that he of whose effects he was thus in a manner taking possession was actually deceased. However, as the lawyer bluntly said, Raymond's attention to such matters could not affect the fact one way or the other, and he felt it his duty to put him into possession of certain particulars.

There were responsibilities of a delicate nature which beshrank from continuing to undertake without consultation with the dead man's heir, although he was still in his legal infancy. These were by no means satisfactory in a moral point of view; but what, perhaps, gave the young man greater pain, was the revelation of his father's wealth. It seemed impossible that the reasons that had been advanced to him from time to time for the necessity for economy could have been founded on fact; and if not, they were mere excuses for parsimonious conduct. In particular, there was a sum of no less than 20,000*l.* in a separate investment, of which Raymond had never so much as heard: and it was the knowledge of this fact, no doubt, that led Ralph Pennicuck to name that precise amount as what he was willing to pay to the Chinese authorities by way of bribe, when he was first thrown into prison.

It is common enough, alas! that sorrow for our dead finds mitigation in the revelation of the mourned one's unworthiness; and something of this sort began unconsciously to affect Raymond's mind. He still felt a poignant pity and regret for his father's fate, but the burden of his grief was lightened, and after a while his thoughts grew free to roam in other directions, and the first object towards which they turned was Nelly. His heart was

heavy, but he had a right, like other mourners, to look for comfort; and where was it to be found, if not in the companionship of the girl he loved?

Nearly a fortnight had now elapsed since he had telegraphed to the bankers at Hong Kong, and their silence could be taken as nothing less than a corroboration of the original despatch. It was become only a question of time when he should leave his seclusion and seek consolation from the quarter to which he naturally looked for it. He had heard nothing from Richmond since his visit, and one evening he took up his pen, and wrote to Mrs. Conway that he should call upon her on the ensuing day. That night he had happy dreams, and woke in the morning, for the first time since he had received intelligence of his calamity, without any sense of its oppression. How could it be otherwise, when the morning was to be devoted to his tale of love, and when he knew how willing to listen would be that ear into which he was to pour it?

He had breakfasted, and was about to start, when his clerk brought in a telegram. The colour of its envelope at once informed him that it was not a message of the ordinary kind. It was doubtless the long-expected reply from China. Then for a moment all his old feelings of regret and pain recurred to him. He almost experienced a remorse for the errand on which he was about to start as he stood with the document in his hand, which he knew would be the corroboration of his bereavement. With a sigh he opened the envelope—and then sat down, aghast, struck with a wild astonishment at the first words! ‘From Ralph Pennicuick, Hong Kong, to Raymond Pennicuick, Lincoln’s Inn, London.’ So ran the words. There was no doubt about it. His father was alive, and had himself sent the message. For a moment he could read no further, overcome with an amazement that was perhaps not all delight. Then he read on: ‘Conway killed by Chinese in revenge for insult to an idol. Break the news to family. I start for England by to-morrow’s steamer.’

Conway dead: Nelly’s father dead: and he, Raymond, commissioned to break the news to her! It was terrible—for the moment it even seemed more terrible than the news she had broken to him. The horror of it was enhanced by its contrast with the words he had had in his mind to tell her—and which now perhaps would never be told. In his own case there had been some hope—indeed, the hope had been since realised; but in the present matter there could be none. The tidings had come from the only man who was cognisant of what had happened, who had perhaps even seen the catastrophe with his own eyes—the survivor.

Raymond Pennicuick had a very tender heart; one of the

reasons, perhaps, why women loved him—though they love many heartless fellows also; and he felt altogether unequal to the duty thus suddenly imposed upon him. It was very easy for one, thousands of miles away, to write, ‘Break the news to the family;’ but very difficult for the man that had to do it. It was not, he bethought him, a man’s task at all. It was a woman’s rather, since it was women only that the matter concerned; and then Mrs. Wardlaw at once occurred to him as the proper person to undertake it. She was kind-hearted, but by no means weak; she had, he thought, good judgment; and it was certain that she was very fond of Nelly. He took off his mourning garments—by no means with the rapture which he had pictured to himself he would feel in finding that they were out of place, that his father was, after all, alive and well; and went out upon his unexpected errand. It did not strike him that people might stare to see him going about in coloured clothes. His thoughts were wholly fixed upon those bereaved ones he was about to visit; and upon their changed circumstances. They had been always poor; but would they not now be still poorer? Surely his father, who was, it seemed, so rich, would never permit his lost friend’s wife and daughter to feel the stings of poverty. He knew, however, that their new position would make his father still more antagonistic to his views respecting Nelly; and also that Nelly on her part would be less disposed than ever to act counter to his will. Upon the whole, though he would not have admitted it, he certainly felt more wretched than when he had thought his father was dead.

On arriving at Richmond, he drove straight to Coromandel Lodge, the residence of Mr. John Wardlaw, and which had been so called from a very successful speculation in which his house had been once engaged in Coromandel wood, a substance of which he was nevertheless entirely ignorant. It was a very handsome house, quite new, with all the latest improvements, such as you seldom see in the country except in the neighbourhood of London. No doubt the beauties of park and woodland, of field and river, are much better viewed through vast windows of plate glass than through those scantier ones of the old pattern; but, up to the present time at least, some prejudice is entertained in favour of the more picturesque and old-fashioned style. It was so entertained by Raymond, who, notwithstanding the sad topic that filled his mind, could not but observe the spick-and-span newness as well as the splendour of the Wardlaws’ country mansion. The entrance gates were fresh painted; the very gravel sweep was newly laid down, and showed no other traces of wheel-marks than those made by Mrs. Wardlaw’s new carriage. Mr. Wardlaw always walked

to and from the station. He complained that the cushions of his wife's equipage were too 'slippy,' and that the rug afforded him no such secure foothold as the board of the omnibus to the box seat of which he had been so long accustomed. The master of Coromandel House was still engaged most days in the City, notwithstanding his retirement from active commercial life, and it was so on this occasion.

Raymond was ushered into the drawing-room, and informed that Mrs. Wardlaw would be with him in a few minutes. It was a handsome room, though perhaps a little too gorgeous in the way of paint and gilding, and commanded a lovely view of the winding Thames; the garden sloped down so steeply from the windows that they seemed to look directly out upon the glittering stream, already alive with its flotilla of pleasure boats. Everything spoke of wealth and luxury, and even of beauty. Raymond knew how little the owners of all this splendour cared about it, and especially how little she cared for it for whom it had been purchased. John Wardlaw was really pleased that his wife should possess everything that money could bring: but all this magnificence, and perhaps even the picturesque beauties that accompanied it, were 'quite thrown away,' as she expressed it, upon honest Mrs. Wardlaw, who was never wholly without the feeling of Christopher Sly in the play. It was 'very nice' of John to go to such expense upon her account, but these things were 'too good for the likes of her.' Raymond could not help reflecting how comfortable a little of this superfluous luxury would have made some one else, who would have known how to appreciate it; not that Nelly was fond of grandeur in any form, but she had that artistic temperament which takes pleasure in colour and glow, and knows how to enjoy, where others only plume themselves upon the cost.

Presently his hostess entered the room, in gorgeous hues as to her raiment, but with a countenance toned down to meet the victim of domestic affliction. Raymond did not notice the incongruity, but her woman's eye at once perceived that he was in coloured clothes.

'I am come to you, dear Mrs. Wardlaw, upon a very sad errand.'

'I am sorry for that, Mr. Raymond. I had begun to hope——'

She looked at his summer cravat, and hesitated.

'One trouble has departed only to make room for another,' said he gravely. 'My father, I am thankful to say, is alive and well; the news that reached us of his death has been contradicted by his own hand.'

'That must be a great comfort to you,' said Mrs. Wardlaw

mechanically. What at once occurred to her mind was that the course of true love, which had been running so smoothly of late with her young favourite, would now meet with new obstacles.

‘With these good tidings, however, come some sad news. Captain Conway has met the fate which was attributed to my father: he has been put to death in China.’

‘Captain Conway dead! What will my darling do?’ cried Mrs. Wardlaw; and she plumped down on the sofa, and burst into tears.

‘I knew you would feel for her,—that is why I came to you. I felt sure you would help me to—to—break it to her.’

‘And the widow, the widow!’ continued the good lady, sobbing in great gasps and plunges, like a steam-engine just set going: ‘it will be worse for her than for her daughter, Mr. Raymond, because, you know, they were not good friends.’

‘Just so,’ he answered slowly. He had not as yet thought of that, his mind being fixed so much on Nelly; but now he acknowledged to himself that the task imposed on him would be even more painful than he had anticipated.

‘I hope, I do hope, dear Mr. Raymond, that this sad news will be—will have some set-off against it, for you and Nelly.’

‘I fear not, Mrs. Wardlaw: but this is no time to think of that, in any case.’

‘Nay, but it is the very time. Of course, you can’t talk of marriage in the same breath with death. But you can show by your manner that you have a right derived from Nelly to comfort both of them; they will then understand that, though their natural protector, and their breadwinner, is taken from them, you have put yourself in his place. They will not have other miserable things to worry them besides this evil news.’

‘To comfort them is what above all things I should wish to do, Mrs. Wardlaw.’

‘Where there’s a will, there’s a way, Mr. Raymond.’

She had dried her eyes, and was regarding him with a keen, almost a suspicious, glance.

‘Not always,’ replied he gravely. ‘If you mean, am I willing to marry Nelly——’

‘Yes, that is what I do mean,’ interrupted his companion.

‘Willing! I would give my right hand to do it,’ he continued vehemently. ‘I would marry her to-morrow, if she would have me. How can you suppose that it could be otherwise?’

‘That’s well said,’ observed Mrs. Wardlaw approvingly. ‘That looks, as John says, like business. I was afraid you might not be so eager, because she was poor.’

'I don't know why you should have entertained that fear,' said Raymond. There was a dignity in his tone of which the young man was himself unconscious, but that made his companion wince.

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Raymond,' said she; 'I believe you are a real good sort, and almost good enough for Nelly herself. But John does lay such a stress on money, that he wins one over to believe in it, even in your case. But if such are your feelings, which I do not doubt, why don't you get the knot tied at once—I mean, so soon as she recovers herself from this sad news—and before your pa comes home? There is a difficulty about getting his permission, is there not? Well, why not marry without it, and ask for his blessing instead?'

Raymond could not restrain a smile at this advice, which was delivered with the gravest and most matronly air.

'The difficulties of which you speak, my dear Mrs. Wardlaw, are not in my eyes insurmountable; it is Nelly who considers them to be so.'

'I see; she is afraid of making Mr. Pennicuick angry upon his son's account. Most girls would run that risk if their inclination went the same way: but Nelly is an angel. And now I shall have to break her heart. Well, well, I will put on my bonnet at once, and get it over.'

'I had better go with you, I suppose, Mrs. Wardlaw,' said Raymond hesitatingly.

'Yes: you will not be so useful as I had hoped you might be; but the sight of you will be something.'

In other circumstances such an observation could hardly have been pleasing, but Raymond liked this plain-speaking lady all the more for the manner in which she thus ignored him, because it was for Nelly's sake.

She had her bonnet on, as she promised, 'in a jiffy,' and the two started together on foot for Mrs. Conway's house. Thinking of the scene that lay before them, they both walked on in silence, which was broken only once by Mrs. Wardlaw.

'You must not think me a fool because I am crying,' sobbed the good lady; 'I want to pucker my face up and make my eyes red, that Nelly may know that something has happened. If you could cry too, it would be a good thing; but there!—it's so seldom that a man can do anything really useful.'

If Raymond could not shed tears, it was not because he was not unhappy enough. As he drew near the house that he was about to darken with the shadow of death, his knees trembled under him with the fear that is the worst of fears, though it is no

disgrace—the apprehension of the pain that he must needs inflict upon the heart he loved. Nelly was at the window looking dreamily forth, perhaps for Raymond himself, and her quick eye at once perceived them. They could see too, by her change of countenance, that she augured the importance of their errand. Her own hands quietly opened the front door to them, and, after a silent salutation of them both, she led them into the nearest sitting-room with a grave air.

‘Mamma is ill, Raymond; she has not been herself, as Mrs. Wardlaw knows, ever since——’ her eye rested inquiringly, apprehensively, upon the young man’s face, and it was with a hesitating voice that she concluded her sentence, ‘ever since your sad news came.’

‘His news was false, Nelly,’ interposed Mrs. Wardlaw softly. ‘But what is true is worse—worse a great deal for you and your poor mother. Mr. Raymond has had a telegram from China this morning—from his father——’

‘Hush, hush!’ whispered the young girl, turning deadly pale; ‘mamma is coming downstairs.’

Her step was at the door as she spoke—the heavy inelastic tread that speaks not only of physical weight, but of depression of mind; and the next moment she stood before them.

‘Ah, Raymond, so you are come at last! We were half thinking of coming up to town, and bringing you down with us by force of arms. You should not have allowed sorrow to be so long your sole companion.—What is the matter? Some new misfortune has happened, to judge by your long faces. What is it?’ And she looked impatiently towards her daughter.

‘I don’t know, mamma,’ answered Nelly, white and trembling. ‘But I am afraid there is bad news.’

‘Then why are they so slow to tell it?’ inquired Mrs. Conway, confronting her visitors with an air that was almost menacing. ‘Are we such strangers to misfortune that you need be afraid to break it to us? If there was anything pleasant to tell, there would be some reason for your hesitation, since, being so unused to good news, it might kill us outright; but if it is bad——’

‘It is very bad, dear Mrs. Conway,’ put in Mrs. Wardlaw gently.

‘Well, Nelly is here, and the kitchen chimney is not on fire,’ continued the other sharply; ‘so it can’t be so very shocking.’

‘Oh, mamma!’ said Nelly faintly, ‘you forget there is dear papa.’

‘No, my dear, I don’t forget. I wish sometimes I could. Your papa is in Shanghai, and has no doubt lost his money. He

is always losing either his own or other people's. We shall have to move out of this house, no doubt, and live again in wretched lodgings. I am disgusted, of course, but not surprised.'

'Captain Conway is not at Shanghai,' whispered Mrs. Wardlaw hoarsely. 'He never returned thither. Mr. Pennicuick has telegraphed——'

'What, Ralph?' interrupted Mrs. Conway quickly. 'Is Ralph alive? Then there has been some plot, some falsehood.'

'It was a mistake of the newspapers. The two gentlemen were together; and one of them had the misfortune to provoke the natives by some disrespect towards one of their idols.'

'That was Ralph,' observed Mrs. Conway confidently; 'that was Ralph Pennicuick all over.'

'Indeed it was not so,' continued Mrs. Wardlaw. 'The telegram is quite precise, and comes to Raymond from his father.'

'Is he dead?' whispered Nelly to Raymond. Then, reading his answer in his face, she fell back on the sofa with her eyes closed.

'What have you been telling Nelly?' inquired Mrs. Conway angrily. 'I won't have her made miserable by lying messages from anybody.'

'Indeed, indeed, dear Mrs. Conway,' cried Raymond, 'this is no lie. I wish to Heaven it were; I would give all I have——'

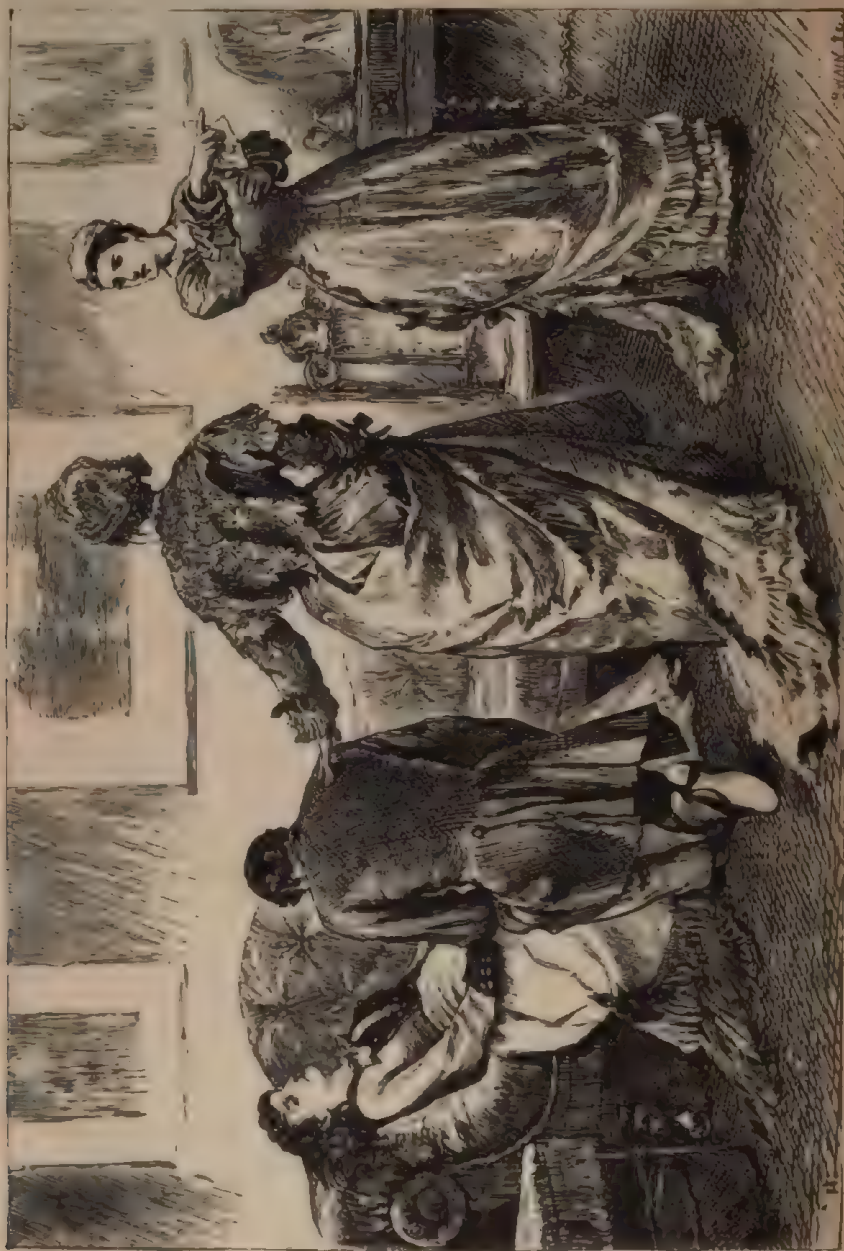
'Show me the telegram,' interrupted Mrs. Conway impatiently.

Raymond had the document in his pocket, but was by no means inclined to produce it. The terms of it had struck him as curt, if not absolutely unfeeling; it was not a message to put into the hands of those the dead man had left behind him. Besides, this unhappy woman did not as yet seem to understand that her husband *was* dead, that she was a widow, and her daughter fatherless. Nevertheless, since words were utterly wanting to him, he produced the paper and placed it in Mrs. Conway's hand. She read it aloud, in a hard, mechanical voice. 'From Ralph Pennicuick, Hong Kong, to Raymond Pennicuick, Lincoln's Inn, London. —Conway killed by Chinese in revenge for insult to an idol. Break the news to family. I start for England by to-morrow's steamer.'

'I suppose *that* is true,' said Mrs. Conway scornfully. 'about his starting for England. Such men as he generally do come back. But as for the rest of it, it is false.'

'But how *can* it be false, dear Mrs. Conway?' urged Mrs. Wardlaw piteously.

'It is false, I tell you,' cried the wretched woman: 'first, because Ralph Pennicuick writes it: and secondly, because the



YOU HAVE NOT BROKEN MY HEART

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thing he states is an impossibility. Arthur Conway is a man I know quite well, being my husband ; and I tell you it is not in his nature to have insulted those people as described. "Break the news to his family." Well, sir, you have done your mission ; and when you tell him that you did so, add that you were not believed. "Break the news ;" yes, you have broken it, and my daughter's heart ; but you have not broken mine.'

She stood with one hand pressed to her side, while her face twitched and quivered with inward pain ; with the other hand she pointed to the door.

'We had better go,' whispered Mrs. Wardlaw to Raymond, who had thrown himself on his knees beside the sofa like some devotee at the feet of a pictured saint—for Nelly was quite unconscious of his presence. He got up, and obeyed her without a word. Mrs. Conway spoke to neither of them as they went out, but stood rigidly with her hand extended till the door had closed.

'This is sadder than anything I could have imagined, Mrs. Wardlaw,' murmured Raymond to his companion, when they found themselves on the road again. 'Is that unhappy woman mad ?'

'No, no ; the worst is over with her. She has got her daughter in her arms by this time. But your presence was insupportable.'

'My presence ! What have I done ?'

'Nothing. It is useless to discuss the matter ; it is simply that you have the misfortune to be your father's son.'

'But she does not believe even now that her husband is dead.'

'Yes, she does. She knew it the moment she saw us. But she believes there has been some foul play. Of course it is not so ; but that matters little when a woman has a prejudice. Leave Mrs. Conway to herself, and Nelly to me ; they will both, please God, come round in time.'

(To be continued.)

On some Astronomical Myths.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

THE expression 'astronomical myth' has recently been used, on the title-page of a translation from the French, as synonymous with false systems of astronomy. It is not, however, in that sense that I here use it. The history of astronomy presents the records of some rather perplexing observations, not confirmed by later researches, but yet not easily to be explained away or accounted for. Such observations Humboldt described as belonging to the myths of an uncritical period; and it is in that sense that I employ the term 'astronomical myth' in this essay. I propose briefly to describe and comment on some of the more interesting of these observations, which, in whatever sense they are to be interpreted, will be found to afford a useful lesson.

It is hardly necessary, perhaps, to point out that the cases which I include here I regard as really cases in which astronomers have been deceived by illusory observations. Other students of astronomy may differ from me as respects some of these instances. I do not wish to dogmatise, but simply to describe the facts as I see them, and the impressions which I draw from them. Those who view the facts differently will not, I think, have to complain that I have incorrectly described them.

At the outset, let me point out that some observations which were for a long time regarded as mythical have proved to be exact. For instance, when as yet very few telescopes existed, and those very feeble, Galileo's discovery of moons travelling round Jupiter was rejected as an illusion for which Satan received the chief share of credit. There is an amusing and yet in one aspect almost pathetic reference to this in his account of his earlier observations of Saturn. He had seen the planet apparently attended on either side by two smaller planets, as if helping old Saturn along. But on December 4, 1612,¹ turning his telescope on the planet, he found, to his infinite amazement, that not a trace of the companion planets could be seen; there in the field of view of his telescope was the golden-tinted disc of the planet as smoothly

¹ It will be seen from Table X. of my treatise on Saturn that the ring disappeared on December 12, remaining invisible (because turning its dark side earthwards) till the spring of 1613. But on December 4, the ring must have been quite invisible in a telescope so feeble as Galileo's. The ring then would have been little more than a fine line of light as seen with one of our powerful modern telescopes.

rounded as the disc of Mars or Jupiter. 'What,' he wrote, 'is to be said concerning so strange a metamorphosis? Are the two lesser stars consumed after the manner of the solar spots? Have they vanished or suddenly fled? Has Saturn, perhaps, devoured his children? Or were the appearances indeed illusion or fraud, with which the glasses have so long deceived me as well as many others to whom I have shown them? Now, perhaps, is the time come to revive the well-nigh withered hopes of those who, guided by more profound contemplations, have discovered the fallacy of the new observations, and demonstrated the utter impossibility of the existence of those things which the telescope appears to show. I do not know what to say in a case so surprising, so unlooked for, and so novel. The shortness of the time, the unexpected nature of the event, the weakness of my understanding, and the fear of being mistaken, have greatly confounded me.' We now know that these observations, as well as those made soon after by Hevelius, though wrongly interpreted, were correct enough. Nay, we know that if either Galileo or Hevelius had been at the pains to reason out the meaning of the ultimate visibility and disappearance of objects looking like attendant planets, they must have anticipated the discovery, made in 1656 by Huyghens, that Saturn's globe is girdled about by a thin flat ring so vast that, if a score of globes like our earth were set side by side, the range of that row of worlds would be less than the span of the Saturnian ring system.

There is a reference in Galileo's letter to the solar spots: 'Are the two lesser stars,' he says, 'consumed after the manner of the solar spots?' When he thus wrote the spots were among the myths or fables of astronomy, and an explanation was offered by those who did not reject them utterly which has taken its place among forsaken doctrines, those broken toys of astronomers. It is said that when Scheiner, himself a Jesuit, communicated to the Provincial of the Jesuits his discovery of the spots on the sun, the latter, a staunch Aristotelian, cautioned him not to see these things. 'I have read Aristotle's writings from beginning to end many times,' he said, 'and, I can assure you, have nowhere found in them anything similar to what you mention' [amazing circumstance!]. 'Go, therefore, my son, tranquillise yourself; be assured that what you take for spots on the sun are the faults of your glasses or your eyes.' As the idea was obviously inadmissible that a celestial body could be marked by spots, the theory was started that the dark objects apparently seen on the sun's body were in reality small planets revolving round the sun, and a contest arose for the possession of these mythical planets. Tardé

maintained that they should be called *Astra Borbonia*, in honour of the royal family of France; but C. Malapert insisted that they should be called *Sulera Austriaca*. Meantime the outside world laughed at the spots and their names, and at the astronomers who were thought to have invented both. 'Fabritius puts only three spots,' wrote Burton in his 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' 'and those in the sun; Apelles 15, and those without the sun, floating like the Cyanean Isles in the Euxine Sea. Tardé the Frenchman hath observed 33, and those neither spots nor clouds as Galileus supposed, but planets concentric with the sun, and not far from him, with regular motions. Christopher Scheiner' [a significant way of spelling Scheiner's name], 'a German Suissier Jesuit, divides them in *maculus et faculas*, and will have them to be fixed in *solis superficie* and to absolve their periodical and regular motions in 27 or 28 dayes; holding withall the rotation of the sun upon his centre; and are all so confident that they have made schemes and tables of their motions. The Hollander censures all; and thus they disagree among themselves, old and new, irreconcilable in their opinions; thus Aristarchus, thus Hipparchus, thus Ptolomæus, thus Albategnius, &c., with their followers, vary and determine of these celestial orbs and bodies; and so whilst these men contend about the sun and moon, like the philosophers in Lucian, it is to be feared the sun and moon will hide themselves, and be as much offended as she was with those, and send another message to Jupiter, by some new-fangled Icaromenippus, to make an end of all these curious controversies, and scatter them abroad.'

It is well to notice how in this, as in many other instances, the very circumstance which makes scientific research trustworthy caused the unscientific to entertain doubt. If men of science were to arrange beforehand with each other what observations they should publish, how their accounts should be worded, what theories they would endeavour to establish, their results would seem far more trustworthy, their theories far more probable, than according to the method actually adopted. Science, which should be exact, seems altogether inexact, because one observer seems to obtain one result, another a different result. Scientific theories seem unworthy of reliance because scientific men entertain for a long time rival doctrines. But in another and a worthier sense than as the words are used in the 'Critic,' when men of science do agree their agreement is wonderful. It is wonderful, worthy of all admiration, because, before it has been attained, errors long entertained have had to be honestly admitted, because the taunt of inconsistency is not more pleasant to the student of science than to

others; and the man who, having a long time held one doctrine, adopts and enforces another (one perhaps which he had long resisted), is sure to be accused by the many of inconsistency, the truly scientific nature of his procedure being only recognised by the few. The agreement of men of science ought to be regarded also as most significant in another sense. So long as there is room for refusing to admit an important theory advanced by a student of science, it is natural that other students of science should refuse to do so, for in admitting the new theory they are awarding the palm to a rival. In strict principle, of course, this consideration ought to have no influence whatever; as a matter of fact, however, men of science being always men, and not necessarily strengthened by scientific labours against the faults of humanity, the consideration has and must always have influence. Therefore, when the fellow-writers and rivals of Newton or of his followers gave in their adhesion to the Newtonian theory; when in our own time—but let us leave our own time alone, in this respect;—when, speaking generally, a novel doctrine, or some new generalisation, or some great and startling discovery, is admitted by rival students of the branch of astronomy to which it belongs, the probability is great that the weight of evidence has been found altogether overwhelming.

Let us now, however, turn to cases in which, while many observations seem to point to some result, it has appeared that, after all, those observations must have been illusory.

A striking instance in point is found in the perplexing history of the supposed satellite of Venus.

On January 25, 1672, the celebrated astronomer J. D. Cassini saw a crescent shaped and posed like Venus, but smaller, on the western side of the planet. More than fourteen years later, he saw a crescent east of the planet. The object continued visible in the latter case for half an hour, when the approach of daylight obliterated the planet and this phantom moon from view. The apparent distance of the moon from Venus was in both cases small, viz. only one diameter of the planet in the former case, and only three-fifths of that diameter in the latter.

Next, on October 23, 1740, old style, the optician Short, who had had considerable experience in observation, saw a small star, perfectly defined but less luminous than Venus, at a distance from the planet equal to about one-third of the apparent diameter of our moon. This is a long distance, and would correspond to a distance from Venus certainly not less than the moon's distance from the earth. Short was aware of the risk of optical illusion in such matters, and therefore observed Venus with a second telescope; he also used four eye-pieces of different magnifying

power. He says that Venus was very distinct, the air very pure, insomuch that he was able to use a power of 240. The seeming moon had a diameter less than a third of Venus's, and showed the same phase as the planet. Its disc was exceedingly well defined. He observed it several times during a period of about one hour.

Still more convincing, to all appearance, is the account of the observations made by M. Montaigne, as presented to the Academy of Sciences at Paris by M. Baudouin in 1761. The transit of Venus which was to take place on June 6 in that year led to some inquiry as to the satellite supposed to have been seen by Cassini and Short, for of course a transit would be a favourable occasion for observing the satellite. M. Montaigne, who had no faith in the existence of such an attendant, was persuaded to look for it early in 1761. On May 3 he saw a little crescent moon about twenty minutes of arc (nearly two-thirds the apparent diameter of our moon) from the planet. He repeated his observation several times that night, always seeing the small body, but not quite certain, despite its crescent shape, whether it might not be a small star. On the next evening, and again on May 7 and 10, he saw the small companion apparently somewhat farther from Venus and in a different position. He found that it could be seen when Venus was not in the field of view. The following remarks were made respecting these observations in a French work, '*Dictionnaire de Physique*,' published in 1789:—'The year 1761 will be celebrated in astronomy in consequence of the discovery that was made on May 3 of a satellite circulating round Venus. We owe it to M. Montaigne, member of the Society of Limoges. M. Baudouin read before the Academy of Sciences at Paris a very interesting memoir, in which he gave a determination of the revolution and distance of the satellite. From the calculations of this expert astronomer we learn that the new star has a diameter about one-fourth that of Venus, is distant from Venus almost as far as the moon from our earth, has a period of nine days seven hours' [much too short, by the way, to be true, expert though M. Baudouin is said to have been], 'and its ascending node'—but we need not trouble ourselves about its ascending node.

Three years later, Rödiker at Copenhagen, on March 3 and 4, 1764, saw the satellite of Venus with a refracting telescope 38 feet long, which should have been effective if longitude has any virtue. He could not see the satellite with another telescope which he tried. But several of his friends saw it with the long telescope. Amongst others, Horrebow, Professor of Astronomy, saw the satellite on March 10 and 11, after taking several precautions to prevent optical illusion. A few days later Montharon, at Auxerre, who

had heard nothing of these observations, saw a satellite; and again on March 28 and 29 it appeared, always in a different position.

It should be added that Scheuten asserted that during the transit of 1761 Venus was accompanied by a small satellite in her motion across the sun's face.

So confidently did many believe in this satellite of Venus, that Frederick the Great, who for some reason imagined that he was entitled to dispose as he pleased of the newly-discovered body, proposed to assign it away to the mathematician D'Alembert, who excused himself from accepting the questionable honour in the following terms:—

'Your Majesty does me too much honour in wishing to baptize this new planet with my name. I am neither great enough to become the satellite of Venus in the heavens, nor well enough (*assez bien portant*) to be so on the earth, and I am too well content with the small place I occupy in this lower world to be ambitious of a place in the firmament.'

It is not at all easy to explain how this phantom satellite came to be seen. Father Hell, of Vienna—the same astronomer whom Sir G. Airy suspects of falling asleep during the progress of the transit of Venus in 1769—made some experiments showing how a false image of the planet might be seen beside the true one, the false image being smaller and fainter, like the moons seen by Schort (so Hell called Short), Cassini, and the rest. And more recently, Sir David Brewster stated that Wargentin 'had in his possession a good achromatic telescope which always showed Venus with such a satellite.' But Hell admitted that the falsehood of the unreal Venus was easily detected, and Brewster adds to his account of Wargentin's phantom moon that 'the deception was discovered by turning the telescope about its axis.' As Admiral Smyth well remarks, to endeavour to explain away in this manner the observations made by Cassini and Short 'must be a mere pleasantry, for it is impossible such accurate observers could have been deceived by so gross a neglect.' Smyth, by the way, was a believer in the moon of Venus. 'The contested satellite is perhaps extremely minute,' he says, 'while some part of its body may be less capable of reflecting light than others; and when the splendour of its primary and our inconvenient station for watching it are considered, it must be conceded that, however slight the hope may be, search ought not to be relinquished.'

Setting aside Scheuten's asserted recognition of a dark body near Venus during the transit of 1761, Venus has always appeared without any attendant when in transit. As no one else claimed to have seen what Scheuten saw in 1761, though the transit was

observed by hundreds, of whom many used far finer telescopes than he, we must consider that he allowed his imagination to deceive him. During the transit of 1769, and again on December 8-9, 1874, Venus certainly had no companion during her transit.

What, then, was it that Cassini, Short, Montaigne, and the rest supposed they saw? The idea has been thrown out by Mr. Webb that mirage caused the illusion. But he appears to have overlooked the fact that, though an image of Venus formed by mirage would be fainter than the planet, it would not be smaller. It might, according to the circumstances, be above Venus or below, or even somewhat towards either side, and it might be either a direct or an inverted image, but it could not possibly be a diminished image.

Single observations like Cassini's or Short's might be explained as subjective phenomena, but this explanation will not avail in the case of the Copenhagen observations.

I reject, as every student of astronomy will reject, the idea of wilful deception. Occasionally an observer may pretend to see what he has not seen, though I believe this very seldom happens. But even if Cassini and the rest had been notoriously untrustworthy persons, instead of being (some of them) distinguished for the care and accuracy with which their observations were made and recorded, these occasional views of a phantom satellite are by no means such observations as they would have invented. No distinction was to be gained by observations which could not be confirmed by astronomers possessing more powerful telescopes. Cassini, for example, knew well that nothing but his well-earned reputation could have saved him from suspicion or ridicule when he announced that he had seen Venus attended by a satellite.

It seems to me probable that the false satellite was an optical illusion brought about in a different way from those referred to by Hell and Brewster, though, among the various circumstances which in an imperfect instrument might bring about this result, I do not undertake to make a selection. It is certain that Venus's satellite has vanished with the improvement of telescopes, while it is equally certain that even with the best modern instruments illusions occasionally appear which deceive even the scientific elect. Three years have passed since I heard the eminent observer Otto Struve, of Pulkowa, give an elaborate account of a companion to the star Procyon, describing the apparent brightness, distance, and motions of this companion body for the edification of the Astronomer-Royal and many other observers. I had visited but a few months before the Observatory at Washington, where, with a much more powerful telescope, that companion to Procyon had

been systematically but fruitlessly sought for, and I entertained a very strong opinion, notwithstanding the circumstantial nature of Struve's account and his confidence (shared in unquestioningly by others who were present), that he had been in some way deceived. But I could not then see, nor has anyone yet explained, how this could be. The fact, however, that he had been deceived is now undoubted. Subsequent research has shown that the Pulkowa telescope, though a very fine instrument, possesses the undesirable faculty of making a companion orb for all first-class stars in the position where O. Struve and his assistant Lindenau saw the supposed companion of Procyon.

I may as well point out, however, that theories so wild have recently been broached respecting Venus, that far more interesting explanations of the enigma than this optical one may be looked for presently. It has [been gravely suggested by Mr. James Brett, the artist, that Venus has a surface of metallic brilliancy, with 'a vitreous atmosphere,' which can only be understood to signify a glass envelope. This stupendous theory has had its origin in an observation of considerable interest, which astronomers (it is perhaps hardly necessary to say) explain somewhat differently. When Venus has made her entry in part upon the sun's face at the beginning of transit, there is seen all round the portion of her disc which still remains outside the sun an arc of light so brilliant that it records its photographic trace during the instantaneous exposure required in solar photography. It is mathematically demonstrable that this arc of light is precisely what should be seen if Venus has an atmosphere like our earth's. But mathematical demonstration is not sufficient (or perhaps we may say it is too much) for some minds. Therefore, to simplify matters, Venus has been provided with a mirror surface and a glass case.

We owe, by the way, an astronomical myth of the first water to the same ingenious artist. The sun's corona, seen during the time of total solar eclipse, vanishes from view to ordinary eyesight with the first returning rays of direct sunlight. But Mr. Brett sees it, or what he takes to be the corona, in full daylight.

The enigma next to be considered is of a more doubtful character than the myth relating to a satellite of Venus. Astronomers are pretty well agreed that Venus has no moon; but many, including some deservedly eminent, retain full belief in the story of the planet Vulcan.

More than seventeen years ago the astronomical world was startled by the announcement that a new planet had been discovered, under circumstances unlike any which had heretofore attended the discovery of fresh members of the solar system. At

that time astronomers had already become accustomed to the discovery year after year of several asteroids, which are in reality planets though small ones. In fact, no fewer than fifty-six of these bodies were then known, whereof fifty-one had been discovered during the years 1847-1858 inclusive, not one of these years having passed without the detection of an asteroid. But all these planets belonged to one family; and as there was every reason to believe that thousands more travelled in the same region of the solar system, the detection of a few more among the number had no longer any special interest for astronomers. The discovery of the first known member of the family had indeed been full of interest, and had worthily inaugurated the present century, on the first day of which it was made. For it had been effected in pursuance of a set scheme, and astronomers had almost given up all hopes of success in that scheme when Piazzi announced his detection of little Ceres. Again the discovery of the next few members of the family had been interesting as revealing the existence of a new order of bodies in the solar system. No one had suspected the possibility that besides the large bodies which travel round the sun, either singly or attended by subordinate families of moons, there might be a ring of many planets. This was what the discovery of Ceres, Pallas, Juno, and Vesta seemed to suggest, unless—still stranger thought—these were but fragments of a mighty planet which had been shattered in long-past ages by some tremendous explosion. Since then, however, this startling theory has been (itself) exploded. Year after year new members of the ring of multitudinous planets are discovered, and that, not as was recently predicted, in numbers gradually decreasing, but so rapidly that more have been discovered during the last ten years than during the preceding twenty.

The discovery of the giant planet Uranus, an orb exceeding our earth twelve and a half times in mass and seventy-four times in volume, was a matter of much greater importance, so far as the dignity of the planetary system was concerned; for it is known that the whole ring of asteroids together does not equal one-tenth part of the earth in mass, while Uranus exceeds many times in volume the entire family of terrestrial planets—Mercury, Venus, the Earth, and Mars. The detection of Uranus, unlike that of Ceres, was effected by accident. Sir W. Herschel was looking for double stars of a particular kind in the constellation Gemini when by good fortune the stranger was observed.

The interest with which astronomers received the announcement of the discovery of Uranus, though great, was not to be compared with that with which they deservedly welcomed the discovery of Neptune, a larger and more massive planet, revolving at a distance

one-half greater even than the mighty space which separates Uranus from the sun—a space so great that by comparison with it the range of 184,000 of miles, which forms the diameter of our earth's orbit, seems quite insignificant. It was not, however, the vastness of Neptune's mass or volume, or the awful remoteness of the path along which he pursues his gloomy course, which attracted the interest of astronomers, but the strangeness of the circumstances under which the planet had been detected. His influence had been felt for many years before astronomers thought of looking for him; and even when the idea had occurred to one or two, it was considered, and that too by an astronomer as deservedly eminent as Sir G. Airy, too chimerical to be reasonably entertained. All the world now knows how Leverrier, the greatest living master of physical astronomy, and Adams, then scarce known outside Cambridge, both conceived the idea of finding the planet, not by the simple method of looking for it with a telescope, but by the mathematical analysis of the planet's disturbing influence upon known members of the solar system. All know, too, how these mathematicians succeeded in their calculations, and how the planet was found in the very region and close to the very point indicated first by Adams, and later, but independently (and fortunately for him more publicly), by Leverrier.

None of these instances of the discovery of members of the solar system resembled in method or details the discovery announced early in the year 1859. It was not amid the star-depths and in the darkness of night that the new planet was looked for, but in broad day, and on the face of the sun himself. It was not on the outskirts of the solar system that the planet was supposed to be travelling, but within the orbit of Mercury, hitherto regarded as of all planets the nearest to the sun. It was not hoped that any calculation of the perturbations of other planets would show the place of the stranger, though certain changes in the orbit of Mercury seemed clearly enough to indicate the stranger's existence.

Early in 1860, Leverrier had announced that the position of Mercury's path was not precisely in agreement with calculations based on the adopted estimates of the masses of those planets which chiefly disturb the motions of Mercury. The part of the path where Mercury is nearest to the sun, and where, therefore, he travels fastest, had slightly shifted from its calculated place. This part of the path was expected to move, but it had moved more than was expected; and of course Mercury, having his region of swiftest motion somewhat differently placed than was anticipated, himself moved somewhat differently.

Leverrier found that, to explain this feature of Mercury's motion,

either the mass of Venus must be regarded as one-tenth greater than had been supposed, or some unknown cause must be regarded as affecting the motion of Mercury. A planet as large as Mercury, about midway between Mercury and the sun, would account for the observed disturbance; but Leverrier rejected the belief that such a planet exists, simply because he could not 'believe that it would be invisible during total eclipses of the sun.' 'All difficulties disappear,' he added, 'if we admit, in place of a single planet, small bodies circulating between Mercury and the sun.' Considering their existence as not at all improbable, he advised astronomers to watch for them.

It was on January 2, 1860, that Leverrier thus wrote. On December 22, 1859, a letter had been addressed by a M. Lescarbault of Orgères to Leverrier, through M. Vallée, hon. inspector-general of roads and bridges, announcing that on March 26, 1859, about four in the afternoon, Lescarbault had seen a round black spot on the face of the sun, and had watched it as it passed across, like a planet in transit, not with the slow motion of an ordinary sun-spot. The actual time during which the round spot was visible was one hour seventeen minutes nine seconds, the rate of motion being such that, had the spot crossed the middle of the sun's disc at the same rate, the transit would have lasted more than four hours. The spot thus merely skirted the sun's disc, being at no time more than about one forty-sixth part of the sun's apparent diameter from the edge of the sun. Lescarbault expressed the conviction that on a future day a black spot, perfectly round and very small, will be seen passing over the sun, and 'this point will very probably be the planet whose path I observed on March 26, 1859.' 'I am persuaded,' he added, 'that this body is the planet, or one of the planets, whose existence in the vicinity of the sun M. Leverrier had made known a few months ago' (referring to the preliminary announcement of results which Leverrier published afterwards more definitely).

Leverrier, when the news of Lescarbault's observation first reached him, was surprised that the observation should not have been announced earlier. He did not consider the delay sufficiently justified by Lescarbault's statement that he wished to see the spot again. He therefore set out for Orgères, accompanied by M. Vallée. 'The predominant feeling in Leverrier's mind,' says Abbé Moigno, 'was the wish to unmask an attempt to impose upon him, as the person more likely than any other astronomer to listen to the allegation that his prophecy had been fulfilled.'

'One should have seen M. Lescarbault,' says Moigno, 'so small, so simple, so modest, and so timid, in order to understand the

emotion with which he was seized, when Leverrier, from his great height, and with that blunt intonation which he can command, thus addressed him: "It is then you, sir, who pretend to have observed the intra-mercurial planet, and who have committed the grave offence of keeping your observation secret for nine months. I warn you that I have come here with the intention of doing justice to your pretensions, and of demonstrating either that you have been dishonest or deceived. Tell me, then, unequivocally, what you have seen." This singular address did not bring the interview, as one might have expected, to an abrupt end. The lamb, as the Abbé calls the doctor, trembling, stammered out an account of what he had seen. He explained how he had timed the passage of the black spot. 'Where is your chronometer?' asked Leverrier. 'It is this watch, the faithful companion of my professional journeys.' 'What! with that old watch, showing only minutes, dare you talk of estimating seconds. My suspicions are already too well confirmed.' 'Pardon me, I have a pendulum which beats seconds.' 'Show it me.' The doctor brings down a silk thread to which an ivory ball is attached. Fixing the upper end to a nail, he draws the ball a little from the vertical, counts the number of oscillations, and shows that his pendulum beats seconds; he explains also how, his profession requiring him to feel pulses and count pulsations, he has no difficulty in mentally keeping record of successive seconds.

Having been shown the telescope with which the observation was made, the record of the observation (on a piece of paper covered with grease and laudanum, and doing service as a marker in the '*Connaissance des Temps*,' or French Nautical Almanac), Leverrier presently inquired if Lescarbault had attempted to deduce the planet's distance from the sun from the period of its transit. The doctor admitted that he had attempted this, but, being no mathematician, had failed to achieve success with the problem. He showed the rough drafts of his futile attempts at calculation on a board in his workshop; for said he naively, 'I am a joiner as well as an astronomer.'

The interview satisfied Leverrier that a new planet, travelling within the orbit of Mercury, had really been discovered. 'With a grace and dignity full of kindness,' says a contemporary narrative of these events,¹ 'he congratulated Lescarbault on the important discovery which he had made. Anxious to obtain some mark of respect for the discoverer of Vulcan, Leverrier made inquiry concerning his private character, and learned from the village curé, the juge de paix, and other functionaries, that he was a skilful

¹ *North British Review* for August 1860.

physician and a worthy man. With such high recommendations, M. Leverrier requested from M. Rouland, the Minister of Public Instruction, the decoration of the Legion of Honour for M. Lescarbault. The Minister, in a brief but interesting statement of his claim, communicated this request to the Emperor, who by a decree dated January 25 conferred upon the village astronomer the honours so justly due to him. His professional brethren in Paris were equally solicitous to testify their regard; and MM. Felix Roubaud, Legrande, and Caffé, as delegates of the scientific press, proposed to the medical body, and to the scientific world in Paris, to invite Lescarbault to a banquet in the Hôtel de Louvre on January 18.'

The announcement of the supposed discovery caused astronomers to re-examine records of former observations of black spots moving across the sun. Several such records existed, but they had gradually come to be regarded as of no real importance. Wolff of Zurich published a list of no fewer than twenty such observations made since 1762. Carrington added many other cases. Comparing together three of these observations, Wolff found that they would be satisfied by a planet having a period of revolution of $19\frac{1}{4}$ days, agreeing fairly with the period of rather more than $19\frac{1}{4}$ days inferred by Leverrier for Lescarbault's planet. But the entire set of observations of black spots require that there should be at least three new planets travelling between Mercury and the sun. Many observers also set themselves the task of searching for Vulcan, as the supposed new planet was called. They have continued fruitlessly to observe the sun for this purpose until the present time.

While the excitement over Lescarbault's discovery was at its height, another observer impugned not only the discovery but the honesty of the discoverer.

M. Liais, a French astronomer of considerable skill, formerly of the Paris Observatory, but at the time of Lescarbault's achievement in the service of the Brazilian Government, published a paper, '*Sur la nouvelle Planète annoncée par M. Lescarbault*,' in which he endeavoured to establish the four following points:—

First, the observation of Lescarbault was never made.

Secondly, Leverrier was mistaken in considering that a planet such as Vulcan might have escaped detection when off the sun's face.

Thirdly, Vulcan would certainly have been seen during total solar eclipses, if the planet had a real objective existence.

Fourthly, M. Leverrier's reasons for believing that the planet

exists are based on the supposition that astronomical observations are more precise than they really are.

Probably, Liais's objections would have had more weight with Leverrier had the fourth point been omitted. It was rash in a former subordinate to impugn the verdict of the chief of the Paris Observatory on a matter belonging to that special department of astronomy which an observatory chief might be expected to understand thoroughly. It is thought daring in the extreme for one outside the circles of official astronomy (as Sir Isaac Newton in Flamsteed's time, Sir W. Herschel in Maskelyne's, and Sir J. Herschel in the present century) to advance or maintain an opinion adverse to that of some official chief; but for a subordinate (even though no longer so) to be guilty of such rash procedure 'is most tolerable and not to be endured,' as a typical official has said. Accordingly very little attention was paid by Leverrier to Liais's objections.

Yet, in some respects, what M. Liais had to say was very much to the point.

At the very time when Lescarbault was watching the black spot on the sun's face, Liais was examining the sun with a telescope of much greater magnifying power, and saw no such spot. His attention was specially directed to the edge of the sun (where Lescarbault saw the spot) because he was engaged in determining the decrease of the sun's brightness near the edge. Moreover, he was examining the very part of the sun's edge where Lescarbault saw the planet enter, at a time when it must have been twelve minutes (in time) upon the face of the sun, and well within the margin of the solar disc. The negative evidence here is strong; though it must always be remembered that negative evidence requires to be overwhelmingly strong before it can be admitted as effective against positive evidence. It seems at a first view utterly impossible that Liais, examining with a more powerful telescope the region where Lescarbault saw the spot, could have failed to see it had it been there; but experience shows that it is not impossible for an observer engaged in examining phenomena of one class to overlook a phenomenon of another class, even when glaringly obvious. All we can say is that Liais was not likely to have overlooked Lescarbault's planet had it been there; and we must combine this probability against Vulcan's existence with arguments derived from other considerations. There is also the possibility of an error in time. As the writer in the '*North British Review*' remarks, 'twelve minutes is so short a time, that it is just possible that the planet may not have entered upon the sun during the time that Liais observed it.'

The second and third arguments are stronger. In fact, I do not see how they can be resisted.

It is, in the first place, clear from Lescarbault's account that Vulcan must have a considerable diameter—certainly, if Vulcan's diameter in miles were only half the diameter of Mercury, it would have been all but impossible for Lescarbault with his small telescope to see Vulcan at all, whereas he saw the black spot very distinctly. Say Vulcan has half the diameter of Mercury, and let us compare the brightness of these two planets when at their greatest apparent distances from the sun, when each looks like a half-moon. The distance of Mercury exceeds the estimated distance of Vulcan from the sun as 27 exceeds 10; so that Vulcan is more strongly illuminated in the proportion of 27 times 27 to 10 times 10, or 729 to 100—say at least 7 to 1. But, having a diameter but half as large, the disc of Vulcan could be but about a fourth of Mercury's at the same distance from us, and they would be at about the same distance from us when seen as half-moons. Hence Vulcan would be brighter than Mercury in the proportion of 7 to 4. Of course, being so near the sun, he would not be so easily seen; and we could never expect to see him at all, perhaps, with the naked eye—though even this is not certain. But Mercury when at the same apparent distance from the sun, and giving less light than at his greatest seeming distance, is quite easily seen in the telescope. Much more easily, then, should Vulcan be seen, if a telescope were rightly directed at such a time, or when Vulcan was anywhere near his greatest seeming distance from the sun. Now, it is true, astronomers do not know precisely when or where to look for him. But he passes from his greatest distance on one side of the sun to his greatest distance on the other in less than ten days, according to the computed period, and certainly (that is, if the planet exists) in a very short time. The astronomer has, then, only to examine day after day a region of small extent on either side of the sun, for ten or twelve days in succession (an hour's observation each day would suffice), to be sure of seeing Vulcan. Yet many astronomers have made such search many times over, without seeing any trace of the planet. During total solar eclipses, again, the planet has been repeatedly looked for unsuccessfully—though it should at such a time be a very conspicuous object when favourably placed, and could scarcely fail of being very distinctly seen wherever placed.

The fourth argument of Lescarbault is not so effective, and in fact he gets beyond his depth in dealing with it. But it is to be noticed that a considerable portion of the discrepancy between Mercury's observed and calculated motions has long since been

accounted for by the changed estimate of the earth's mass as compared with the sun's, resulting from the new determination of the sun's distance. However, the arguments depending on this consideration would not be suitable to these pages.

There was one feature in Liais's paper which was a little unfortunate. He questioned Lescarbault's honesty. He said: 'Lescarbault contradicts himself in having first asserted that he saw the planet enter upon the sun's disc, and having afterwards admitted to Leverrier that it had been on the disc some seconds before he saw it, and that he had merely inferred the time of its entry from the rate of its motion afterwards. If this one assertion be fabricated, the whole may be so.' 'He considers these arguments to be strengthened,' says the 'North British Review,' 'by the assertion which, as we have seen, perplexed Leverrier himself, that if M. Lescarbault had actually seen a planet on the sun, he could not have kept it secret for nine months.'

This charge of dishonesty, unfortunate in itself, had the unfortunate effect of preventing Lescarbault or the Abbé Moigno from replying. The latter simply remarked that the accusation was of such a nature as to dispense him from any obligation to refute it. This was an error of judgment, I cannot but think, *if* an effective reply was really available.

The remarks with which the 'North British Reviewer' closes his account may be repeated now, so far as they relate to the force of the negative evidence, with tenfold effect. 'Since the first notice of the discovery in the beginning of January 1860 the sun has been anxiously observed by astronomers; and the limited area around him in which the planet *must be*, if he is not upon the sun, has doubtless been explored with equal care by telescopes of high power, and processes by which the sun's direct light has been excluded from the tube of the telescope as well as the eye of the observer, and yet no planet has been found. This fact would entitle us to conclude that no such planet exists if its existence had been merely conjectured, or if it had been deduced from any of the laws of planetary distance, or even if Leverrier or Adams had announced it as the probable result of planetary perturbations. If the finest telescopes cannot rediscover a planet which with the small power used by Lescarbault has a visible disc, within so limited an area of which the sun is the centre, or rather within a narrow belt of that circle, we should unhesitatingly declare that no such planet exists. But the question assumes a very different aspect when it involves moral considerations. If, proceeds the Reviewer, writing in August 1860, after the severe scrutiny which the sun and its vicinity will undergo before and after and during his total

eclipse in July, no planet shall be seen; and if no round black spot distinctly separable from the usual solar spots shall be seen on the solar spots' (*sic*, presumably solar disc was intended), 'we will not dare to say that it does not exist. We cannot doubt the honesty of M. Lescarbault, and we can hardly believe that he was mistaken. No solar spot, no floating scoria, could maintain in its passage over the sun a circular and uniform shape; and we are confident that no other hypothesis but that of an intra-mercurial planet can explain the phenomena seen and measured by M. Lescarbault, a man of high character, possessing excellent instruments, and in every way competent to use them well, and to describe clearly and correctly the results of his observations. Time, however, tries facts as well as speculations. The phenomena observed by the French astronomer may never be again seen, and the disturbance of Mercury which rendered it probable may be otherwise explained. Should this be the case, we must refer the round spot on the sun to some of those illusions of the eye or of the brain which have sometimes disturbed the tranquillity of science.'

The evidence which has accumulated against Vulcan in the interval since this was written is not negative only, but partly positive, as the following instance, which I take from my own narrative at the time in a weekly journal, serves to show:—After more than sixteen years of fruitless watching, astronomers learned last August that in the month of April Vulcan had been seen on the sun's disc in China. On April 4, it appeared, Herr Weber, an observer of considerable skill, stationed at Pecheli, had seen a small round spot on the sun, looking very much as a small planet might be expected to look. A few hours later he turned his telescope upon the sun, and lo! the spot had vanished, precisely as though the planet had passed away after the manner of planets in transit. He forwarded the news of his observation to Europe. The astronomer Wolf, well known for his sun-spot studies, carefully calculated the interval which had passed since Lescarbault saw Vulcan on March 26, 1859, and to his intense satisfaction was enabled to announce that this interval contained the calculated period of the planet an exact number of times. Leverrier at Paris received the announcement still more joyfully; while the Abbé Moigno, who gave Vulcan its name, and has always staunchly believed in the planet's existence, congratulated Lescarbault warmly upon this new view of the shamefaced Vulcan. Not one of those who already believed in the planet had the least doubt as to the reality of Weber's observations, and of these only Lescarbault himself received the news without pleasure. He, it seems, has never

forgiven the Germans for destroying his observatory and library during the invasion of France in 1870, and apparently would prefer that his planet should never be seen again rather than that a German astronomer should have seen it. But the joy of the rest and Lescarbault's sorrow were alike premature. It was found that the spot seen by Weber had not only been observed at the Madrid observatory, where careful watch is kept upon the sun, but had been photographed at Greenwich; and when the description of its appearance as seen in a powerful telescope at one station, and its picture as photographed by a fine telescope at the other, came to be examined, it was proved unmistakably that the spot was an ordinary sun-spot (not even quite round), which had after a few hours disappeared, as even larger sun-spots have been known to do in even a shorter time.

It is clear that, had not Weber's spot been fortunately seen at Madrid and photographed at Greenwich, his observation would have been added to the list of recorded apparitions of Vulcan in transit, for it fitted in perfectly with the theory of Vulcan's real existence. I think, indeed, for my own part, that the good fortune was Weber's. Had it so chanced that thick weather at Madrid and at Greenwich had destroyed the evidence actually obtained to show that what Weber described he really saw, though it was not what he thought, some of the more suspicious would have questioned whether, in the euphonious language of the 'North British Reviewer,' 'the round spot on the sun' was not due 'to one of those illusions of the eye or of the brain which have sometimes disturbed the tranquillity of science.' Of course no one acquainted with M. Weber's antecedents would imagine for a moment that he had invented the observation, even though the objective reality of his spot had not been established. But if a person who is entirely unknown states that he has seen Vulcan, there is antecedently some degree of probability in favour of the belief that the observation is as much a myth as the planet itself. Some observations of Vulcan have certainly been invented. I have received several letters purporting to describe observations of bodies in transit over the sun's face; either the rate of transit, the size of the body, or the path along which it was said to move being utterly inconsistent with the theory that it was an intra-mercurial planet, while yet (herein is the suspicious circumstance of such narratives) the epoch of transit accorded in the most remarkable manner with the period assigned to Vulcan. A paradoxist in America (of Louisville, Kentucky), who had invented a theory of the weather in which the planets, by their influence on the sun, were supposed to produce all weather-changes, the nearer planets being the most

effective, found his theory wanted Vulcan very much. Accordingly, he saw Vulcan crossing the sun's face in September, which, being half a year from March, is a month wherein, according to Lescarbault's observation, Vulcan may be seen in transit. By a strange coincidence, the interval between our paradoxist's observation and Lescarbault's exactly contained a certain number of times the period calculated by Leverrier for Vulcan. This was a noble achievement on the part of the paradoxist. It at once established his theory of the weather, and promised to ensure him text-book immortality as one of the observers of Vulcan. But unfortunately a student of science residing in St. Louis, after leaving the Louisville paradoxist full time to parade his discovery, heartlessly pointed out that an exact number of revolutions of Vulcan after Lescarbault's March observation must of necessity have brought that planet on that side of the sun on which the earth lies in March, so that to see Vulcan so placed on the sun's face in September was to see Vulcan through the sun—a very remarkable achievement indeed. The paradoxist was abashed, the reader imagines? Not in the least. The planet's period must have been wrongly calculated by Leverrier—that was all: the real period was less than half as long as Leverrier had supposed; and, instead of having gone a certain number of times round since Lescarbault had seen it, Vulcan had gone twice as many times round and half once round again. The circumstance that, if Vulcan's period had been thus short, the time of crossing the sun's face would have been much less than, according to Lescarbault's account, it actually was, had not occurred to the Louisville weather-prophet.¹

Leverrier's faith in Vulcan, however, has remained unshaken. He has used all the observations of spots which, like Weber's, have been seen only for a short time. At least, he has used all which have not, like Weber's, been proved to be only transient sun-spots. Selecting those which fit in well with Lescarbault's observation, he has pointed out how remarkable it is that they show this accord. The possibility that some of them might be explicable as Weber's proved to be, and that some even may have been explicable, as completely but less satisfactorily, in another way, seems to have been thought scarce worth considering. Using the imperfect materials available, but with exquisite skill—as a Phidias might model an exquisite figure with materials that would presently crumble into dust—Leverrier came to the conclusion that Vulcan would cross the

¹ He had, indeed, at an earlier stage, shown a marvellous ignorance of astronomy by the remark, which doubtless appeared to him a safe one, that when he saw a planet on the sun in September he supposed it was Mercury; a September transit of Mercury being as impossible as an eclipse of the sun during the moon's third quarter.

sun's disc on or about March 22 last. 'He, therefore,' said Sir G. Airy, addressing the Astronomical Society, 'circulated a despatch among his friends, asking them carefully to observe the sun on March 22.' Sir G. Airy, humouring his honoured friend, sent telegrams to India, Australia, and New Zealand, requesting that observations might be made every two hours or oftener. Leverrier himself wrote to Santiago de Chili and other places; so that, including American and European observations, the sun could be watched all through the twenty-four hours on March 21, 22, and 23. 'Without saying positively that he believed or disbelieved in the existence of the planet,' proceeds the report, 'Sir G. Airy thought, since M. Leverrier was so confident, that the opportunity ought not to be neglected by anybody who professed to take an interest in the progress of planetary astronomy.'

It is perhaps unnecessary to add that observations were made as requested. Many photographs of the sun were also taken during the hours when Vulcan, if he exists at all, might be expected to cross the sun's face. But the 'planet of romance,' as the Abbé Moigno has called Vulcan, failed to appear, and the opinion I had expressed last October ('English Mechanic and World of Science' for October 27, p. 160), that Vulcan might perhaps better be called the 'planet of fiction,' was *pro tanto* confirmed. Nevertheless, I would not be understood to mean by the word 'fiction' aught savouring of fraud so far as Lescarbault is concerned—I prefer the North Briton's view of Lescarbault's spot, that, so to speak,

'Twas the blot upon his brain
That would show itself without.

I have left small space to treat of other fancied discoveries among the orbs of heaven. Yet there are some which are not only interesting but instructive, as showing how even the most careful observers may be led astray. In this respect the mistakes into which observers of great and well-deserved eminence have been led are specially worthy of attention. With the description of three such mistakes, made by no less an astronomer than Sir W. Herschel, I shall bring this paper to a close.

When Sir W. Herschel examined the planet Uranus with his most powerful telescope, he saw the planet to all appearance girt about by two rings at right angles to one another. The illusion was so complete that Herschel for several years remained in the belief that the rings were real. They were, however, mere optical illusions, due to the imperfect defining qualities of the telescope with which he observed the planet. Later he wrote that 'the observations which tend to ascertain' (indicate?) 'the existence of rings not being satisfactorily supported, it will be proper that

surmises of them should either be given up as ill founded, or at least reserved till superior instruments can be provided.'

Sir W. Herschel was more completely misled by the false Uranian satellites. He had seen, as he supposed, no less than six of these bodies. As only two of these had been seen again, while two more were discovered by Lassell, the inference was that Uranus has eight satellites in all. These for a long time flourished in our text-books of astronomy; and many writers, confident in the care and skill of Sir W. Herschel, were unable for a long time to believe that he had been deceived. Thus Admiral Smyth, in his '*Celestial Cycle*,' wrote of those who doubted the extra satellites: 'They must have but a meagre notion of Sir W. Herschel's powerful means, his skill in their application, and his method of deliberate procedure. So far from doubting there being six satellites' (this was before Lassell had discovered the other two), 'it is highly probable that there are still more.' Whewell, also, in his '*Bridgewater Treatise*,' says that, though it no longer appears probable that Uranus has a ring like Saturn, he has at least five satellites which are visible to us; and we believe that the astronomer will hardly deny that he' (Uranus, not the astronomer) 'may possibly have thousands of smaller ones circulating about him.' But in this case Sir W. Herschel, anxiously though he endeavoured to guard against the possibility of error, was certainly mistaken. Uranus may, for anything that is known to the contrary, have many small satellites circulating about him, but he certainly has not four satellites (besides those known) which could have been seen by Sir W. Herschel with the telescope he employed. For the neighbourhood of the planet has been carefully examined with telescopes of much greater power by observers who, with those telescopes, have seen objects far fainter than the satellites supposed to have been seen by the elder Herschel; and yet no such satellites have been seen.

The third of the Herschelian myths was the lunar volcano in eruption which he supposed he had seen in progress in that part of the moon which was not at the time illuminated by the sun's rays. He saw a bright star-like point of light, which corresponded in position with the crater of the lunar mountain Aristarchus. He inferred that a volcano was in active eruption, because the brightness of the point of light varied from time to time, and also because he did not remember to have seen it before under the same conditions. There is, no doubt, something very remarkable in the way in which this part of the moon's surface shines when not illuminated by the sun. If it were always bright, we should conclude at once that the earth-light shining upon it rendered it visible. For it must be remembered that the part of the moon which looks

dark (or seems wanting to the full disc) is illuminated by our earth, shining in the sky of the moon as a disc thirteen times as large as that of the moon we see, and with the same proportion of its disc sunlit as is dark in the moon's disc. Thus, when the moon is nearly new, our earth is shining in the lunar skies as a nearly full moon, thirteen times as large as ours. The light of this noble moon must illumine the moon's surface much more brightly than a terrestrial landscape is illumined by the full moon; and if any parts of her surface are very white they will shine out from the surface around, just as the snow-covered peak of a mountain shines out upon a moonlit night from among the darker hills and dales and rocks and forests of the landscape. But Herschel considered that the occasional brightness of the crater Aristarchus could not be thus explained. The spot had been seen, before the time of Herschel's observations, by Cassini and others. It has been seen since by Captain Kater, Francis Baily, and many others. Dr. Maskelyne tells us that in March 1794 it was seen with the naked eye by two persons.

Baily thus describes the appearance presented by this lunar crater on December 22, 1835: 'Directed telescope to the moon, and pointing it to the dark part in the vicinity of Aristarchus soon saw the outline of that mountain very distinctly, formed like an irregular nebula. Nearly in the centre was a light resembling that of a star of the ninth or tenth magnitude. It appeared by glimpses; but at times was brilliant, and visible for several seconds together.'

There can be little doubt, however, that the apparent brightness of this lunar crater, or rather of its summit, is due to some peculiar quality in the surface, which may perhaps be covered by crystalline or vitreous matter poured out in the far distant time when the crater was an active one. Professor Shaler, who examined the crater when illuminated only by earth-shine, with the fine 15-inch telescope of Harvard Observatory (Cambridge, U.S.), says that he has been able to recognise nearly all the craters, over 15 miles in diameter, in the dark part. 'There are several degrees of brightness,' he says, 'observable in the different objects which shine out by the earth-light. This fact probably explains the greater part of the perplexing statements concerning the illumination of certain craters. It certainly accounts for the volcanic activity which has so often been supposed to be manifested by Aristarchus. Under the illumination by the earth-light this is by far the brightest object on the dark part of the moon's face, and is visible much longer and with poorer glasses than any other object there.'

Here my record of astronomical myths must be brought to

a close. It will be noticed that in every instance either the illusion has affected the actual observations of eminent and skilful astronomers, or has caused such astronomers to put faith for a while in illusory observations. Had I cared to include the mistakes which have been made by observers of less experience, I could have filled many sheets for each page of the present article. But it has seemed to me more instructive to show how error may affect the observations even of the most careful and deservedly eminent astronomers, and how even the most cautious may be for a time misled by the mistakes of inferior observers, especially when the fact supposed to have been observed accords with preconceived opinions.'

With the Tide.

THE ocean breezes, fresh and free,
Blew o'er the shell-strewn sand,
When little Edith, close to me,—
She seemed to fear the boisterous sea,—
Stretched out her tiny hand.

'And may I keep it, Edith dear,'
Said I, 'while life shall last?—
The threatening waves are drawing near;
We may not loiter long, I fear—
The tide is flowing fast.'

And Edith, blushing, whispered low :
'Away all fears I fling;
Let storms arise and wild winds blow,
While through life's ocean's rapid flow,
My love, to you I cling.'



'MAY I KEEP IT, EDITH DEAR!

The Story of a Patron Saint.

MANY contradictory stories are told about the body of St. Mark, even in Venice, where the relic is believed to be enshrined. Its precise whereabouts are unknown,—‘because,’ say the Venetians, ‘the last Doge did not divulge the secret.’ The last Doge was Manin (Lodovigo), who abdicated on May 12, 1797, after St. Mark had been the patron saint of Venice for nearly a thousand years.

According to the most trustworthy accounts,—as revealed in documents recently brought to light,—the body of St. Mark was taken to Venice for special reasons (and not by mere chance); one of those reasons being that the inhabitants were tired of St. Theodore—their patron saint till the days of the tenth Doge, Angelo Partecipazio. At this period of their history, the Venetians discovered that they were badly represented in Heaven! How could they expect prosperity on earth? St. Theodore was a good saint, but he was lazy; the miracles he performed were of little use; and, people clamouring for a change, wise men pondered over the problem. Were there not grades of beatitude? was it not possible to have a more powerful protector than St. Theodore? This, then, was the difficulty. A weak saint, but a strong partnership of Doges; a father with his two sons (as assistant Doges) ruling over Venice, but the city badly attended to on the other side of the grave! What remedy could be applied to so glaring an evil? Whose ministry could be appealed to in the parliament of saints and martyrs? Angelo, and his sons Giovanni and Giustiniano, wearied their saint from day to day with useless prayers, and Giustiniano (afterwards eleventh Doge) finally made up his mind that Venice should have a new guardian. Three Doges, reigning together, were not enough for the young republic; it must have a fourth potentate, that potentate being St. Mark. But the body of the great Evangelist was lying on a distant shore; namely, in Alexandria, in Egypt. How obtain it? How place Venice under the protection of a saint so highly esteemed—and so capable of performing miracles—as the writer of the second gospel?

In the year of grace 827, the eleventh Doge occupying the ducal seat, a number of strange rumours reached Venice; namely, that the body of St. Mark was resting uneasily in its coffin; that the shrine built over his tomb was being desecrated by infidels;

that money could buy the relic, if properly offered (*i.e.* with money in one hand and a knife in the other!); and, finally, that the saint himself was anxious to be transferred to Venice. The persons who set this rumour afloat were sailors trading to and fro between the Lagunes and Egypt; men who at an emergency could become pirates or merchants; men to whom theft and murder were acts of grace, if committed in the name of religion. These men, after consultation with the Doge, returned to Egypt, properly supplied with money and properly armed, and entered Alexandria in a very religious frame of mind,—intent on stealing their saint, if they could not obtain him by other means.

When they reached the shrine, they found it under repair; masons and builders were at work in the church; the priests who guarded the body were on the tip-toe of expectation for some remarkable occurrence. Visions had appeared of saints and martyrs with wreaths of fire on their foreheads; a lion with wings (the Lion of St. Mark) had been seen prowling about the city; a saint in a white robe (believed to be Santa Claudia) had waylaid one of the priests on his way home. Surely a miracle was at hand! The priests took counsel one with the other. Why not remove the saint's body until the church, now under repair, was thoroughly restored? At this juncture arrived the merchants of Venice—merchants, or sailors, or pirates—call them what we will; in those days the words were pretty well synonymous.

The priests and the merchants met and deliberated. The former had merchandise to sell; the latter had money in their pockets: how should the transfer be made? How much was a dead saint worth, if a living man—sold as a slave—was worth such and such a sum? A word, a look, a grasp of the hand; the whole thing was settled in a moment. The merchants were to have the saint's body, and the priests were to sew another saint in St. Mark's cerements. What corpse more appropriate than the body of Santa Claudia—she who had appeared in visions in the streets of Alexandria?

St. Mark was taken out of his cerements, and deposited in a basket which the merchants had brought into the church. Over the body were thrown sweet-smelling flowers, and over the flowers a number of joints of pork, the flowers and the pork being introduced for special reasons: the flowers to deaden the odour of sanctity (which was sure to emanate from the body), and the pork to frighten away such Mahomedans as might be tempted to pry into the basket.

The corpse of Santa Claudia being exchanged for that of St. Mark, the priests imagined that their work was done; but they

were mistaken. Men and women—the former with sticks and crutches, some of the latter with children in their arms—rushed into the church, exclaiming wildly: ‘Where is St. Mark the Apostle? Where is St. Mark the beloved of God?’ Women and girls fell down on their knees; old men laid their foreheads in the dust; the younger and bolder fellows insisted on seeing the body. The basket of pork had had its effect; the inhabitants, drawn from their homes and workshops by the odour of sanctity, had flocked to the church to examine the saint’s coffin! But the good priests were equal to the emergency. They exhibited the shroud containing the body of Santa Claudia; they bowed and prayed, they made the sign of the cross before the saint’s cerements, and said prayers before the high altar; and the people, pacified, though not altogether convinced, returned in peace to their dwellings. The odour of sanctity was not the odour they had always been accustomed to as the odour of St. Mark, but it was a sweet and comforting odour enough; and moreover it was a miraculous odour, for the new saint had therewith performed her first miracle; making the people believe that she—Santa Claudia—was St. Mark the Apostle! The early historians of Venice chuckle over this event; and one and all concur in stating that the fraud was a pious one, and therefore no fraud at all.

But the risks of the enterprise were not confined to the church. While the sailors were conveying their prize to the sea-shore, they were beset by men and women anxious to have a peep at the basket. But for a magic word—a word taught by the priests—the basket and its bearers might have been sorely handled; the word was ‘khanzir,’ and it meant pig. ‘What have you got in your basket?’ ‘Pig!’ ‘Why are you in such a hurry to reach your ship?’ ‘Pig! pig!’ ‘The devil take you and your burden; you are tainting the air for us.’ ‘Pig! pig! pig!’ The sailors were persistent in their replies, and the crowd fell back in trepidation. What was the meaning of this odour of sanctity in the wake of a basketful of pork?

The body of St. Mark was stowed away carefully on board the Venetian ship. The flowers and the pork, with their sediment of saint in the bottom of the basket, disappeared in the hold, and the sailors, with that word ‘khanzir’ still ringing in their ears, got ready for departure. But they had reckoned without their host. Here, for instance, is a man in authority who insists on climbing into the ship. What does he want? He is a custom-house officer; he is on the look-out for contraband goods. Is he, too, afraid of pork? And, if not, are relics contraband? Down went a sailor into the hold of the ship; up came the basket in the

sailor's arms, wrapt in an old sail; up went the sail strung to the mainmast, as part of the ship's furniture. Honest seaman! Wise and sensible precaution! The officer withdrew in disgust, and the ship set sail without further adventure for the Port of Venice.

But the voyage was long and troublesome, and the mariners had a hard time of it. Worried by storms, waylaid by fogs—stranded, becalmed, and bedevilled—the captain once or twice gave himself up for lost. One night in a hurricane, the vessel plunging like a mad thing in the midst of the rocks—the moon shining weirdly on the scene through a great gash in the clouds—a tall man in white appeared at the helm with a wreath of fire on his head. The helmsman stepped aside, and running up to the captain (who was asleep) woke him, and told him what had happened. The captain and his crew knelt down on the deck; the wind sank, the sea became suddenly calm! Who was this tall man with a wreath of fire on his head and a white robe, like that of an angel, reaching from head to foot? St. Mark the Evangelist! Who but he would have interceded in this way for the preservation of the basket of pork? The ship got clear of the rocks, and the saint, leaving behind him an odour of sanctity—as fiends leave behind them an odour of sulphur—vanished into thin air.

The ship reached Venice on January 31, 828, two days before the great *fête* of the Purification. The captain's name was Rustico, the steersman's Buono or Buoni; this last a native of Malamocco. The landing was effected at a place now occupied by the church and convent of San Francesco della Vigna, not far from the Island of St. Michael (the cemetery), and close to the Arsenal. But the Arsenal did not exist in those days, and the dead were not taken to St. Michael's Island. The whole place was a desert: a wilderness of islands, half swamp and half sand, but considered in ordinary times a safe harbour, and an easy if not a convenient landing-place. Rustico and Buono hastened to the Doge's house near the Rialto, to invite his Excellency to visit the ship.

But a greater than the Doge had given the saint welcome to Venice. Tradition is so explicit on the matter, and the early Venetians are so positive about it, that I shall not attempt to gainsay it. The figure in white, which stood on the shore to greet the Evangelist, was not a lady or a priest; it was not Santa Claudia; it was not the figure of the fat old Doge; it was an angel from heaven, and the angel's words may be read to this day on monuments and churches all over the city. The utterance of the angel is beyond dispute. It was oracular and made in Latin, and the Latin is as good as any now spoken at the Vatican: *Pax tibi, Marce, Evangelistu meus*. Who can doubt the authenticity

of words so explicit—words which, for a thousand years, became the motto of the Republic? Doubt the name of Rustico, if you will; doubt the name of Buono, if you dare; doubt the existence of the Doge, if you can (supposing you to be a whitewasher of history): but do not for a moment doubt the scholarship, or the existence, of the angel who received the body of St. Mark.

The new saint was carried to his temporary shrine near the Rialto, not far from the ducal mansion; and there received with honour. The Doge's palace was not built in those days, and the tract of land now known as the Piazza San Marco was an ugly waste, and in wet weather a marsh, cut up into two unequal parts by a canal, with a bridge over it. But on this ugly waste, games and festivals, the precursors of the tournaments of the Middle Ages, had been held at various times; and here, in honour of St. Mark, a grand procession was formed during the first week in February. St. Theodore was solemnly deposed. The church in the square was rebuilt and reconsecrated, and the new saint, from the beginning of the ninth to the end of the eighteenth century, became the patron of Venice. His lion became the symbol of Venetian power; it was painted on shields and woven on standards; it was impressed on coins; it was set up in effigy in various parts of the city. Tourists admire it at the present day over the entrance to the cathedral, and on the clock-tower; a lion with eagle's wings, with the face of a man, having under its paw a book wide open, with the words of the angel, as quoted above, written in golden letters. But the body of St. Mark is believed to have been stolen in the sixteenth century by Carossio, a usurping Doge, and by him sold or otherwise disposed of to religious communities in various parts of Europe—a tooth to one, a bone to another, a lock of hair to another, and so forth; so that, strictly speaking (if these reports be true), Venice no longer possesses a patron saint. No one knows the resting-place of St. Mark's body. Was it really stolen by Carossio, or did it disappear of its own accord when the last Doge abdicated in favour of Buonaparte, the saint being unwilling to survive the fall of the Republic? The answers to these questions are not easy to find. Those who profess to know most about the matter assert gravely that the 'resting-place of St. Mark's body has been a profound secret for hundreds of years.' Being a secret, and those who knew it being dead, what wonder if the present writer is unable to divulge it?

GEORGE ERIC MACKAY.

Oh! Nora, Nora!

Oh! Nora, Nora! have you forgotten
 The fond confession that you made to me,
 When round us fluttered the white bog cotton,
 And o'er us waved the wild arbutus tree?
 Like Heaven's own azure glancing through the bowers,
 No sooner were your blue eyes sought than flown;
 Till, white and fluttering as the cotton flowers,
 Your tender hand it slipped into my own.

Oh! Nora, Nora! do you remember
 The faithful promise that you made to me
 The night we parted, in black December,
 Beneath the tempest-tossed arbutus tree?—
 When, faster than the drops from Heaven flowing,
 Your heavy tears they showered with ceaseless start,
 And, wilder than the storm-wind round us blowing,
 Your bitter sobs they smote upon my heart?

Oh! Nora, Nora! for your love only
 I left my father and mother dear:
 Within the churchyard they're lying lonely;
 'Tis from their tombstone I've travelled here.
 Their only son, you sent me o'er the billow:
 Ochone! though, kneeling, they implored me stay;
 They sickened, with no child to soothe their pillow;
 They died: are you as dead to me as they?

Oh, Nora! must then the love I bore you,
 Seven lonesome summers of longing trust,
 Turn, like the fortune I've gathered for you,
 Like treacherous fairy treasure, into dust?

But, Nora, bawn asthore, your proud lips quiver:
 Into your scornful eyes the tears they start;
 Your rebel hand returns to mine for ever;
 Yes! Nora, Nora! never more we'll part.

THE AUTHOR OF 'SONGS OF KILLARNEY.'

English Opera.

BY H. BARTON BAKER.

MUSIC has been interwoven with our dramatic forms from the earliest times. Our first comedy, 'Gammer Gurton's Needle,' is interspersed with songs, and songs are scattered through many of the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries; while the masques of Jonson and Shirley are veritable musical pieces. Davenant's plays, however, are the first that can be designated operatic. Under date May 5, 1658, Evelyn recorded in his Diary: 'I went to visit my brother in London, and next day to see a new opera, after the Italian way in recitative music and scenes, much inferior to the Italian composure in magnificence,' &c. Several of Dryden's plays are regularly constructed operas, although they were not recognised as a distinct species of composition. With these is associated a name which, due allowance being made for the imperfect development of the art at this period, may be regarded as that of the greatest of English composers—Henry Purcell. In a dedication to the Duke of Somerset (1691) he says: 'Music is yet but in its nonage, a forward child, which gives hope of what it may hereafter be in England when the masters of it shall find more encouragement. 'Tis now learning Italian, which is its best master, and studying a little of the French air, to give it somewhat more air and fashion.' He composed some fine music to Dryden's 'King Arthur,' to Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Prophetess' and 'Bonduca'—the 'Britons, strike Home,' of the latter is still among the most spirit-stirring of our national songs—and he wrote some beautiful music to Shakespeare's 'Tempest' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream' (altered and called the 'Fairy Queen'). That of the former has been partly superseded by Arne's, the latter wholly so by Mendelssohn's. 'However this Italian method of recitative,' writes the 'Spectator,' 'might appear at first hearing, I cannot but think it much more just than that which prevailed in our English opera before this innovation; the transition from an air to recitative music being more natural than the passing from a song to plain and ordinary speaking, which was the common method in Purcell's operas.' But this method has been preserved in English opera unto the present day.

Purcell's works were immensely popular in their time; but upon the introduction of Italian opera, at the commencement of the

eighteenth century, English music was neglected, until the appearance of Gay's famous work in 1728 again restored its popularity at the expense of its rival. Pope has told the story of its origin so well that I cannot do better than quote his words: 'Dr. Swift had been observing to Mr. Gay what an odd pretty thing a Newgate Pastoral might make. Gay was inclined to try such a thing for some time, but afterwards thought it would be better to write a comedy on the same plan. This was what gave rise to "The Beggar's Opera." He began on it; and, when he first mentioned it to Swift, the Doctor did not much like the project. As he carried it on, he showed what he wrote to both of us, and we now and then gave a correction or a word of advice; but it was wholly of his own writing. When it was done, neither of us thought it would succeed. We showed it to Congreve, who said it would either take greatly or be damned confoundedly. We were all, at the first night of it, in great uncertainty of the event, till we were much encouraged by hearing the Duke of Argyle, who sat in the next box to us, say, "It will do, it must do! I see it in the eyes of them!" This was a good while before the first act was over, and so gave us ease soon; for the Duke (besides his own good taste) had a particular knack in discovering the taste of the public. He was quite right in this, as usual; the good nature of the audience appeared stronger every act, and ended in a clamour of applause.' Of its ultimate success the following description is taken from the notes to the 'Dunciad': 'This piece was received with greater applause than was ever known. Besides being acted in London sixty-three days without intermission, and renewed the next season with equal applause, it spread into all the towns of England; it made its progress into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland; the ladies carried about with them the favourite songs of it in their fans; houses were furnished with it in screens; furthermore, it drove out of England (for the season) the Italian Opera, which had carried all before it for ten years.'

Beyond the beauty of the music, much of this vast popularity was owing to its political significance. Sir Robert Walpole, hearing he had been especially aimed at, was present the first night. When Lockit sang—

When you censure the age,
Be cautious and sage,
Lest the courtiers offended should be;
If you mention vice or bribe,
'Tis so pat to all the tribe,
That each cries, 'That was levelled at me—'

the whole audience turned their faces towards the minister's box;

but he mortified those who were anticipating his mortification by applauding and calling out 'encore!' In the quarrel scene between Peachum and Lockit the allusion was yet more marked. Only a week or two previously there had been a quarrel between Walpole and Townshend over some political question; Townshend had seized Sir Robert by the collar, swords were drawn, and Mrs. Selwyn, at whose house the scene took place, was rushing off to call the guard. The story was soon buzzed all over the town, and its representation upon the stage was hailed with uproarious delight. Walpole, who was even nicknamed Bob Booty from one of the characters, kept his equanimity throughout, and witnessed his own gibbeting on several occasions. But one night, hearing some new lines introduced, he went behind the scenes, and, having ascertained the introduction to be 'a gag,' soundly caned the actor who had spoken it. Gay's punishment he kept in reserve.

The play was fraught with important consequences to several people. In the first place, it brought 2000*l.* to its author's pockets. It made Lavinia Fenton, the original Polly Peachum, the idol of the town; her portrait was engraved and everywhere exposed for sale, accompanied by laudatory verses. The Duke of Bolton was so enchanted by her singing 'Oh, ponder well,' that he ultimately made her a Duchess. Her contemporaries speak of her as beautiful and very accomplished, and as adorning by her wit and good sense the high rank to which she was raised. As a specimen of the theatrical salaries of the period, although she had previously made a hit, Rich engaged her for Covent Garden at fifteen shillings a week, which upon the success of 'The Beggar's Opera' he raised to thirty. Quin was originally cast for Macheath; a most injudicious choice—and he knew it. Hearing Walker, a brother-actor, humming one of the airs at rehearsal, he said, 'There's a man much more qualified for the part than I.' Gay upon the hint changed the cast. Walker made almost as great a success as 'Polly;' but fell in consequence into such dissipated company and excesses that he lived only a few years afterwards. Gay was assisted in the composition by several celebrated contemporaries. The song, 'The Modes of the Court,' was written by Lord Chesterfield; 'Virgins are like the fair Flower in its Lustre,' by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams; 'When you censure the Age,' by Swift; 'Gamesters and Lawyers are Jugglers alike,' by Fortescue, the Master of the Rolls. Sir John Fielding, the Bow Street magistrate, averred that the play had greatly increased the number of highwaymen; and that after every successful run a greater number than usual of these depredators was brought to the office. Both Swift and Johnson con-

sidered the charge of immorality brought against the piece to be unfounded. The question is a vexed one, and has arisen upon many other similar productions since Gay's; but I think it may be admitted that a man's morals must be *in extremis* if such a representation would convert him into a robber. 'The Beggar's Opera' is still occasionally revived for some favourite tenor; and, obsolete as it is as a literary composition, its charming purely English melodies are as delightful to us now as they were to our great-great-grandfathers.

But the history of the piece is not yet finished. Upon the success of the first part, Gay produced a second, 'Polly,' a somewhat dull affair, and wholly devoid of political allusions. But Walpole, who had bided his time for revenge, procured its prohibition; upon which the irritated poet resolved to publish it by subscription. The Duchess of Queensbury, his firm friend and patroness, set herself at the head of this undertaking, and solicited every person that came in her way to subscribe. People were ashamed to refuse a woman of her position half-a-guinea, and yet were afraid to give it. She came even into the Queen's apartments, went round the drawing-room, and made the King's servants subscribe to the printing of what the King had forbidden being acted. The King seeing her Grace very busy in a corner with three or four gentlemen, asked her what she had been doing. 'What I am sure must be agreeable to anybody so humane as your Majesty, for it is an act of charity, and a charity I do not despair of bringing your Majesty to contribute to.' The end of the business was, that the Duchess was forbidden to appear at Court. To which she replied in a haughty and defiant letter, which began: 'The Duchess of Queensbury is surprised and well pleased that the King hath given her so agreeable a command as to stay away from Court, where she never came for diversion, but to bestow a great civility on the King and Queen,' &c. Soon afterwards the Duke, her husband, resigned his appointments, and the Queensburys were long out of favour.

From 'The Beggar's Opera' and 'Polly' we pass on to a much nobler composition, the exquisite pastoral 'Acis and Galatea,' which, although written by a foreign composer, cannot but be regarded as purely English. Handel never intended this work to be performed after the manner of an opera. It was so produced at the Haymarket without his sanction, and announced in the following terms: 'May 10, 1732, at the Theatre in the Haymarket, on Thursday the 12th instant, "Acis and Galatea," a pastoral drama, set by Mr. Handel, will be performed, with all the choruses, scenes, machines, and other decorations; being the first time it

has been performed in a theatrical way. The part of *Acis* by Mr. Mountier, being the first time of his appearing in character on any stage; *Galatea* by Miss Arne (afterwards Mrs. Cibber). In answer to this, Handel put forth the subjoined announcement: 'June 10, will be performed "*Acis and Galatea*," a serenata, revised with several additions, at the Opera House, by a great number of the best voices and instruments. *There will be no action on the stage*: but the scene will represent, in a picturesque manner, a rural prospect, with rocks, groves, fountains, and grottoes, among which will be disposed a chorus of nymphs and shepherds; the habits and decorations suited to the subject.'

This was by far the finest musical work that had yet been given to the English public; but its execution by indifferent and ill-trained singers could scarcely have been satisfactory. It has been said that it took the choristers a twelvemonth to learn the choruses! About this time there sprang up several imitations of 'The Beggar's Opera.' Henry Carey, the author of 'Sally in our Alley,' wrote some excellent music to Fielding's burlesque of 'Tom Thumb.' In conjunction with a composer, popular in his day, named Lampe, he wrote 'The Dragon of Wantley,' founded upon the old story of 'Moore of Morehall.' In this the absurdities of the best known Italian operas were most felicitously burlesqued, and the music, both vocal and instrumental, was excellent. It took the town by storm, and rivalled, if it did not surpass, the popularity of Gay's 'Pastoral.' 'This opera,' says a musical critic, 'is one of the things which cause regret that so many fine productions of the old time have fallen into oblivion. Were it once more brought upon the stage, the piece would be found very amusing, and the music exceedingly agreeable, while the principal parts would display to advantage the powers of our best vocal performers.' This might serve as a hint for some of our worn-out burlesque writers, who might there recruit their exhausted wit by a little transfusion, and find melodies that would save them begging 'permission' to introduce the vapid trash of the concert-hall into their productions.

In the year after the production of 'The Dragon of Wantley' (1738), Arne wrote his beautiful music to Milton's 'Comus.' Beard, a famous singer of his day, was the *Comus*; Kitty Clive, who in the first years of her professional career was a singer rather than an actress, the *Euphrosyne*; and Mrs. Arne, *née* Miss Cecilia Young, a very fine vocalist, the *Lady*. Arne, whose father was an upholsterer in Covent Garden, was intended for the bar, but his love of music was a passion too strong to be restrained. His sister, the afterwards celebrated Mrs. Cibber, had a very fine voice, which

his example induced her to assiduously cultivate. It was for her he wrote the soprano music of his first opera, 'Rosamond.'¹ His most ambitious work, composed in exact conformity with the Italian school of the period, was 'Artaxerxes' (1762), which retained its place as a test of ability to all our greatest English singers until within half a century ago. The famous 'Soldier Tired' first introduced the Italian bravura and florid style to the ordinary English public—for in those days the Opera was patronised only by the world of fashion. There appears to have been a great improvement in the vocalists about this time; formerly, as is still the case in small provincial theatres, the music was rendered by the ordinary performers, who might be gifted with some voice and some little knowledge of the art; but Arne took great pains in training the exponents of his compositions. Miss Brent, a lady who afterwards attained great celebrity as the original Mandane, was his pupil. Ere she appeared in public, Garrick desired to hear her. He admitted that she was very fine, but added: 'After all, Tommy, you should consider that music is at best but pickle to my roast beef.' 'By ——, Davy,' answered the composer, 'your beef shall be well pickled before I have done.' And he kept his word. As Polly in 'The Beggar's Opera,' Miss Brent drew all the town to Covent Garden, and Drury Lane was almost deserted. The next season, Garrick was obliged in self-defence to engage rival singers.

'Artaxerxes' belongs to a school against which Glück struck the first blow, and of which Mozart completed the destruction,—a school of vapid melodies, poor orchestration, and florid execution. Not upon this work, but upon his Shakespearian songs, such as, 'Where the bee sucks,' 'When daisies pied,' 'Blow, blow, thou wintry wind,' and our magnificent national anthem, 'Rule Britannia,' does his fame rest. The music of Bickerstaff's charming old opera, 'Love in a Village,' is his, but it was partly selected from the Italian.

Sheridan's 'Duenna,' with Linley's music, made a great success, running seventy-five nights. But then, as now in England, the singers could not act, and the actors could not sing; Mrs. Mattocks and Quick had to sustain the dramatic action, while other personages, who were quite independent of the plot, were brought on to sing the music.

One of the earliest of our English singers to whom the term

¹ This was Addison's work, produced in 1706 with music by Clayton, which Arne now reset. Originally it was a failure; and it is said that this was the cause of the bitter sarcasms which Addison flings at the Italian Opera throughout the *Spectator*.

prima donna might be justly applied was Miss Philips, better known by her married name of Mrs. Crouch, who first appeared, in 1780, in the old musical piece of 'The Lord of the Manor.' Michael Kelly, in his 'Reminiscences,' tells us how much he was struck at first sight by her surpassing beauty: 'She seemed to me,' he says, 'to aggregate in herself, like the Venus of Apelles, all that was exquisite and charming.' She turned all the male heads wherever she went, and was the heroine of more than one romance. A young fellow in Dublin threatened to shoot her and himself afterwards if she persisted in refusing to marry him, and was arrested in the pit of the theatre with a pistol in his pocket on the same night. A gentleman of position in Limerick was more fortunate in winning her favour. She agreed to elope with him; but no one could be found to marry them: the priests feared the anger of his family, who were very influential in those parts. The lovers were making their way to the coast to embark for Scotland, when they were overtaken and separated never to meet again. On another occasion some officers who were half intoxicated came behind the scenes and insisted upon escorting her home; in great terror she locked herself in her dressing-room. They vowed they would burst it open. Her father usually waited to see her home, but, being ill that night, he had deputed the duty to John Kemble, who was then playing there. Kemble came up in the middle of the disturbance and requested the officers to withdraw, telling them the lady was under his protection. They refused: 'Very well, gentlemen,' answered Kemble, 'I shall fulfil my trust though it be at the risk of my life. You can come forth, Miss Philips, without fear.' The dressing-room door opened, and the young lady, white and trembling, issued therefrom. As Kemble turned to give her his hand, one of the fellows made a cut at his head with a cutlass. Fortunately, a female dresser who stood by caught the murderous arm, or the tragedian would certainly have been killed. Quite unmoved by the imminent peril, he turned to his preserver with a quotation, 'Well done, Euphrasia!' Then, drawing his sword and taking the lady's hand, he led her out of the theatre without further molestation. The next morning the colonel in command, to whom the adventure had been reported, sent to Kemble to say that the delinquents should make any apology he liked to dictate for their conduct. Miss Philips afterwards married a lieutenant in the navy; but the match was an unhappy one. She died while still young and in the full possession of her powers.

The second half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century were particularly rich in those musical dramas and farces which continued to be so popular even to our fathers'

time. From 1765 to 1802, Arnold composed music for no fewer than forty-three operatic plays. The names of many are still familiar to us: 'The Battle of Hexham;' 'The Castle of Andalusia,' revived a few years since at the Haymarket; 'Inkle and Yarico,' founded upon the well-known story in the 'Spectator;' 'The Mountaineers,' written by the younger Colman; 'The Children in the Wood.' Better known still are Charles Dibdin's 'Padlock,' 'Lionel and Clarissa,' 'The Quaker,' 'The Waterman,' some of the pretty melodies of which are still heard in the concert-room. Shield's 'Poor Soldier' and 'Rosina' have fallen into oblivion. Among the large number of metropolitan theatres, in the present difficulty of obtaining entertainments for them, might not a home be found for some of these old favourites?—*well done*, they would still please a large portion of the public; though they would not have long runs,—and unfortunately the modern manager has come to regard those as the only desiderata; some of the shorter pieces are well adapted for a *lever de rideau*, and might take the place of the melancholy horrors which are now inflicted upon suffering audiences.

A perhaps finer composer than those yet named was poor Storace, whose 'No Song, no Supper,' must ever continue to charm all who have ears for tuneful melody; while the finale to the first act may claim approbation upon yet higher ground. Garrick's 'Country Girl' and this operetta formed the final performance at the old Drury Lane Theatre on June 4, 1791. The following paragraph, amusingly describing the event, is copied from a newspaper of the period, and was, I believe, written by Colman the younger:—

'Died on Saturday night of a gradual decay, in the hundred and seventeenth year of her age, old Madame Drury, who lived in six reigns, and saw many generations pass in review before her. She remembered Betterton in age, lived in intimacy with Booth, Wilkes, and Cibber, and knew old Macklin when he was a stripling; her hospitality exceeded that of the English character, even in its earliest days of festivity, having almost through the whole of her life entertained from one to two thousand persons of both sexes six nights out of the seven in the week; she was an excellent poetess, could be gay and grave by turns, and sometimes, catching disorder from intrusive guests, could be dull enough in all conscience; her memory was excellent, and her singing kept in such a gradual state of improvement, that it was allowed her voice was better the three or four last years of her life than when she was in her prime. At the latter end of the last century, she had a rout of nearly two thousand people at her house the very night of her death; and the old lady felt herself in such spirits, that she said she would give

them *no supper without a song*; which being complied with, she fell gently back in her chair, and expired without a groan. Dr. Palmer,¹ one of her family physicians, attended her in her last moments and announced her dissolution to the company.

Braham made his first recognised appearance on March 30, 1796, in Storace's 'Mahmoud.' It was a posthumous work, the composer expiring ere it was completed, at the early age of thirty-three. The great English tenor had made his *début* nine years previously, while yet a boy, at the old 'Royalty' as Master Abrahams. The fineness of his voice had then attracted the attention of a wealthy Jew, who placed him under competent tuition. He afterwards studied in Italy.

A famous operatic piece of the old time was 'Blue Beard,' written by Colman the younger, the music by Michael Kelly, produced at Drury Lane in 1801. In the first scene there was a grand procession of Blue Beard's army, which is first seen in the distance winding among the mountains. To preserve the perspective, boys were employed for this part of the spectacle. He who represented Blue Beard, mounted on an elephant, was little Edmund Kean. Did he then imagine that he would one day be the great and all-dominating genius of that house? It is not at all improbable, for the boy had a soaring ambition. *À propos* of the elephant a good story is told. While the piece was preparing, Sheridan went into the property room one day to consult with Johnson, the property-maker, among other matters, about this very animal. 'Don't you think,' said the great lessee, 'that you had better go to Pidcock's at Exeter 'Change' (then a celebrated menagerie), 'and hire an elephant for a number of nights?' 'Not I, sir; if I can't make a better elephant than that at Exeter 'Change I ought to be hanged,' contemptuously replied Johnson, who evidently believed art to be superior to nature. Although the play made so decided a success, it was greatly endangered during the earlier scenes by carpenters' blunders. One of these, as told by Kelly himself, is amusing enough to quote:—

'At the end of the piece, when Blue Beard is slain by Selim, a most ludicrous scene took place. Where Blue Beard sinks under the stage, a skeleton rises, which when seen by the audience was to sink down again; but not one inch would the snid skeleton move. I, who had just been killing Blue Beard, totally forgetting where I was, ran up with my drawn sabre, and pummelled the poor skeleton's head with all my might, vociferating, until he disappeared, loud enough to be heard by the whole house, "D—you, why don't you go down?" The audience were in roars of

¹ John Palmer, the actor who addressed the audience at the fall of the curtain.

laughter at this ridiculous scene, but good-naturedly appeared to enter into the feelings of an infuriated composer.' Kelly adds that the piece was saved only by Miss Decamp's fine rendering of 'I see them galloping' in the last scene. Kelly composed music for a number of pieces, but there was little originality in any of it. When he afterwards set up as a wine merchant, Sheridan said that above his door should be painted the words—'Michael Kelly, composer of wines and importer of music.'

The great English singers of this time were Braham, Incledon, and Mrs. Billington. Braham composed his own music; 'The Devil's Bridge,' 'The Cabinet,' &c., were once highly popular, but disappeared with the author of their being; as an actor he was ungraceful in appearance and below mediocrity. Many preferred the singing of his great rival; but Incledon, who had been a sailor, was coarse, clumsy, vulgar, and his beautiful voice had not received the high cultivation of the other's. Mrs. Billington, whom Kelly enthusiastically describes as 'an angel in beauty, and the Saint Cecilia of song,' sang alternately at the Italian and English Opera Houses; to the latter she drew crowds to hear her in 'Artaxerxes' and 'Love in a Village.'

Bishop's first opera, 'The Circassian Bride,' was produced at Drury Lane in 1809, the night before the fire, in which the score was consumed. But the one hearing was sufficient to convince the public that a new musical star had risen. His beautiful music to 'Guy Mannering,' 'The Miller and his Men,' 'The Slave,' and many other pieces is still too well known to require more than a passing notice in so brief an article as this. But, besides the production of original works, he was obliged to employ his genius in a far less worthy task—to mutilate the operas of great foreign maestros, 'Don Giovanni,' 'Le Nozze,' 'The Barbière,' &c., and adapt them to the barbarous English taste of the time. This attempt to popularise the masterpieces of the art showed that our taste was slowly advancing, but it had not yet got beyond the air-and-gee stage. 'Such was the state of music in England,' says Planché in his *Reminiscences*, 'six-and-forty years ago, that when, in conjunction with Bishop, I had made an attempt in my second opera, "Cortez, or the Conquest of Mexico" (produced November 5, 1823), to introduce concerted pieces and a finale more in accordance with the rules of true operatic construction, it had proved, in spite of all the charm of Bishop's melody, a signal failure. Ballads, duets, choruses, and glees, provided they occupied no more than the fewest number of minutes possible, were all that the play-going public of that day would endure. A dramatic situation in music was "caviare to the general," and was inevitably

received with cries of "Cut it short!" from the gallery, and obstinate coughing or other significant signs of impatience from the pit. Nothing but the Huntsman's Chorus and the diablerie in "*Der Freischütz*" saved that work from immediate condemnation in England; and I remember perfectly well the exquisite melodies in it being compared by English musical critics to "wind through a keyhole!" In a number of the "*Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*" for June 1825, a critic, describing the music of "*Der Freischütz*," says: "Nearly all that was not irresistibly ridiculous was supremely dull."

The same writer's account of the production of '*Oberon*' gives an equally astounding picture of the condition of musical art at this time. In 1826 Charles Kemble engaged Weber to write an opera for Covent Garden; Planché, incomparably the first of English librettists, to supply the words. '*Oberon*' was written and put in rehearsal. Only one of the actors could sing; and but one of the singers, Madame Vestris, could act. To Mrs. Keeley, then a novice, was given '*The Mermaid's Song*.' No vocalist could be found equal to the rôle of Sherasmin, which was played by Fawcett, and a bass singer was brought on for the quartett of '*Over the dark blue waters*.' Braham, a villanous actor with a most unromantic appearance, was the chivalrous Huon; Miss Paton, another fine singer, but equally deficient in the dramatic art, was Reiza; the only part adequately represented was the Fatima of Madame Vestris. The reception accorded to the work is well described by Weber in a letter to his wife. '*My best beloved Caroline, through God's grace and assistance I have this evening met with a most complete and brilliant success. The brilliancy and affecting nature of the triumph are indescribable—God alone be thanked for it! When I entered the orchestra, the whole house, which was filled to overflowing, rose up, and I was saluted by huzzas and waving of hats and handkerchiefs, which I thought would never have done. They insisted on encoring the overture. Every air was interrupted twice or thrice by bursts of applause.*'

But the success was only a hollow one; the music was above the comprehension of the audience of that day, and the houses quickly dropped off to a miserable account of empty benches. Ere '*the run*' was over, the great composer was no more, and within two months of its production it was played for the benefit of his widow and children.

At the same time that '*Oberon*' was brought out at Covent Garden, an opera on the subject of *Aladdin*, the music by Fishop, was produced at Drury Lane; but it was performed only a few nights. Tom Cooke, the leader of the Drury Lane orchestra, met

Braham in Bow Street, and asked him how 'Oberon' was going? 'Magnificently!' replied the tenor enthusiastically. 'Not to speak it profanely, it will run to the Day of Judgment!' 'My dear fellow,' rejoined Cooke, 'that's nothing. Ours *has* run five nights afterwards.'

1834 witnessed the production of Barnett's charming opera, 'The Mountain Sylph,' which ran one hundred nights at the English Opera House. The musical event of 1835 was Balfe's 'Siege of Rochelle,' a work which produced a great sensation at the time, but upon its recent revival made little impression upon an audience that had advanced many grades in musical taste since its advent.

'It was a glorious night,' says Fitzball, describing the event in his 'Thirty-five Years of a Dramatic Author's Life,' 'one to wish your whole life long the first night of a new play or a new opera. The cram there was, the fashion, the delicious music, the enthusiastic applause, the double encores—never had I witnessed anything like it. . . . The applause was so unanimous, *so really applause*. . . . So carried away were even persons of the highest consequence by the enthusiasm created by this beautiful music (thought by many still to be Balfe's best composition), that people bent over and nearly threw themselves from the side boxes next to the orchestra to congratulate and shake hands with the young composer. They crowned him with a wreath of flowers; and I question, amid all the numerous and brilliant successes of this great artist, if he ever felt such a delighted heart as on the first night of the "Siege of Rochelle." It ran nearly the whole season; and the first time her present gracious Majesty went in state to the theatre it was to the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, to see the "Siege of Rochelle."

In Balfe's next opera, 'The Maid of Artois,' he had the incomparable Malibran for his heroine. Two amusing anecdotes are connected with this work. During the last rehearsals he became dissatisfied with the finale; Malibran, on the contrary, insisted that it was the most brilliant piece in the opera, and pronounced it madness to alter it. But Balfe was determined it should be altered. At eight o'clock one morning he hurried off to her lodgings with a new composition he had written during the night. Madame had not risen yet, but her husband, De Beriot, was in the drawing-room. To him Balfe played over the air; he was enchanted, and said his wife must hear it at once. But the lady, not caring to be disturbed, and still bent upon singing the first finale, refused. Balfe suggested that a small cottage piano should be carried up to her bed-room, and that willy-nilly she should listen. De Beriot assented. The instrument was taken upstairs,

the window-curtains opened, and amidst the indignant protestations of the lady the stubborn composer began to play the rondo. He had got through only a few bars when Malibran raised herself upon her elbow with an air of attention ; and soon her face began to glow with delight. When it was finished she burst out into the most rapturous admiration, and promised to sing the piece at rehearsal that same morning. Its success was immense ; and Mr. Kenney, Balfe's biographer, informs us that it carried its composer's name over the whole continent, and even in Russia became an established favourite, being there known as 'Balfe's Air.' Years afterwards, when he was presented to the Empress at a Court concert, he was asked if he were not 'Mr. Balfe of the Air'? I give the second anecdote on the authority of Bunn. 'She had borne along the first two acts in such a flood of triumph, that she was bent by some almost superhuman effort to continue its glory to the fall of the curtain. I went to her dressing-room previous to the commencement of the third act to ask how she felt. "Very tired," she replied ; "but if you will contrive to get me a pint of porter into the desert scene you shall have an encore to your finale." So it was arranged that behind a pillar of drifted sand on which she had to fall in a state of exhaustion towards the close of the desert scene, a small aperture should be made in the stage, and through that aperture a pewter pint of porter was conveyed to her lips. This so refreshed her that after the terrible exertion of the previous scene she electrified the audience by repeating the rondo. During the run of the opera a negro slave in one of the processions had a gourd suspended to his neck, containing the same beverage, with which she nightly recruited her exhausted energies.'

Hitherto English Opera could not be said to have had a separate existence ; some minor houses, especially that under the management of charming Miss Kelly, were chiefly devoted to the old operetta, which after all was only a hybrid, a farce or drama interspersed with music, and not to be included under the classic term, while the great patent theatres had their vocal corps as well as their company for tragedy and comedy, and alternated operas with Shakespeare and Sheridan. It was impossible under such circumstances for any high standard of excellence or even efficiency to be attained in so difficult and jealous an art, which admits of no divided interest. There was neither well-trained chorus nor band, only two or three principals who could sing, and none who could act. Passing over Morris Barnett's eight nights' season with Frank Romer's 'Fridolin,' at the St. James's in 1840, we come to the first attempt made to establish a house entirely devoted to regular and high-class English Opera in 1841, at the Lyceum,

under the management of Balfe. He had a strong company, for the time—his wife, Henry Phillips, Stretton, Miss Poole, &c.—and opened with his ‘Keolanthé.’ Promises of support came from all sides. Majesty herself took a box, everything augured success. But, alas! within two months the best artistes had seceded, and the doors were closed, leaving the speculator, who had not sufficient funds to carry out his undertaking, five hundred pounds in debt. In 1843, Maddox opened the Princess’s with translated operas, and it was there Miss Pyne made her *début*. In the same year Balfe produced his ‘Bohemian Girl’ at Drury Lane. The story was taken from Cervantes’ ‘*Novelas Exemplares*,’ and is identical with that of Weber’s ‘*Preciosa*.’ Miss Romer, who was flatteringly called the English Malibran, a very fine singer, was the original Arline, Harrison the Thaddeus, Borrani the Count. Its immense success, how its airs were bleated and howled by every young lady and gentleman who fancied themselves possessed of a voice and loved to torture their friends by practising it, how they were ground upon every street organ, whistled by every street boy, blown by every brass band, until your whole existence became a dream of marble halls, and everybody, with frightful iteration, was beseeching you to ‘remember me,’—these things are within all our memories.

The best sustained and most successful attempt to establish English Opera was that made by the Pyne and Harrison management, first at the Lyceum and afterwards at Covent Garden, from 1857 to 1863. In the ‘*Rose of Castille*’ Balfe achieved a triumph scarcely inferior to that of the ‘*Bohemian Girl*.’ Then came ‘*Satanella*,’ ‘*The Puritan’s Daughter*,’ &c., closing the list with ‘*The Armourer of Nantes*,’ his twenty-seventh work. Fatal facility! During the last two seasons it was only by the help of the pantomime the house could be kept going. The Italian Opera was no longer an exclusive entertainment for the rich and the *cognoscenti*; the general public frequented it, and cultivated their taste at the shrine of Mozart and Rossini, interpreted by such superlative artistes as Grisi, Mario, Lablache, and soon became tired of the vapid prettiness and often sickly melody of Balfe—who, however, had he concentrated his undoubted talents upon a few compositions, might have produced something worthy of companionship with the great works of Italy and France. But the rapidity with which he wrote necessitated frequent repetition, and resulted in weakness. Again, he was careless in his choice of subjects, and most unhappy in his librettists. As one example of many, is there anything in the world so supremely silly, so idiotic, as the words to which ‘the poet Bunn’ wedded the charming airs of the ‘*Bohemian Girl*’?

I have left myself no space to more than mention the excellent

works of Sir Jules Benedict—'The Bride of Venice,' 'The Crusaders,' of Macfarren—'King Charles the Second,' 'Robin Hood;' of Loder—'The Night Dancers,' and many others. The most recent attempt to create an audience for operas in English is that of Mr. Carl Rosa. With an admirable band and chorus, and one or two excellent principals, he has been most deservedly successful; but the translated works of French and Italian composers have no title to be called *English* operas.

The establishment of an Opera by national composers seems to me more hopeless than ever. Without any unjust depreciation of the acknowledged excellences of our composers, both dead and living, it must, I think, be admitted that our best works are far inferior to the higher productions of Germany, Italy, and even France.

The cry in answer to this is—that English composers meet with no encouragement, that the Opera Houses will not hear of them! Could any discouragement have defrauded the world of a Guglielmo Tell, of a Don Giovanni, a Faust?—although it might have extinguished a Lucia, a Puritani, or a Martha. Talent may be set aside, genius never; and it is genius we require in music at the present day. Within these few years we have become a nation as musical and as highly appreciative, let who will gainsay it, as any in Europe; a mere running stream of prettiness will no longer satisfy us—we require grandeur of idea and scientific orchestration. The popularity of Beethoven, Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn, and Mozart, the eagerness with which even the mass of concert-goers flock to hear the works of these maestros, and the comparative indifference which is manifested to the lighter and more trivial music, indubitably indicate the direction of our taste. Nor must we omit, in such considerations, the favour with which Wagner's 'Flying Dutchman' was received at the Lyceum last year, under Mr. Carl Rosa's excellent management. How would the audience, who could scarcely endure Weber's tuneful 'Oberon,' have received this opera? The distance which separates that time from this in musical taste is almost immeasurable. When English composers rise to the standard which we are ever raising higher and higher, they may depend upon due appreciation, but not before.

Summer Quarters; as Advertised, and in Reality.

WHEN our English spring is becoming less winterly, certain advertisements arrive with the swallows, and build their nests in those columns in the 'Times' which are devoted to dwelling-houses to let. What Paterfamilias has not had them dexterously brought under his notice, as 'just the thing for the dear children in August or September?' and indeed they look attractive enough—on paper.

The Continent, though still popular with many folks, has its disadvantages for persons who only speak their mother tongue; who are subject to sea-sickness; or who have a tender skin. The French and Italian insects are in the last case too much for them. A poet once wrote these lines on the way in which we pass the hours of the night at the seaside—

Two of biting,
Three of scratching,
Four of seeking,
None of catching.

But he was only singing of the British flea. Abroad, matters are much, much more serious. In Normandy last summer, a tourist took 'insect powder' to destroy these nightly enemies; but on the Norman fleas (and worse) it had quite the contrary effect. They 'fed on poison, and it had no power,' but rather invigorated them. The powder was only an additional attraction to them. It is no wonder, to my mind, that persons who cannot do without some sleep o' nights prefer to pass their summer holiday in their native land.

On the other hand, life in our seaside lodging-houses is often a sad experience. Close crowding, bad food, hurdy-gurdies from morning to night, and beds stuffed (apparently) with turnips, detract a great deal from perfect enjoyment. Hence it is that we are favoured with the advertisements of 'exquisite villa residences,' 'quiet and picturesque retreats,' and 'delightful farm-houses,' where families can enjoy the summer months 'exempt from the inconveniences and exactions of lodgings.'

These Mansions of the Blest, I notice, are generally a good many miles from town, so that the Paterfamilias who dislikes two railway journeys, or the expense of them, is often induced to take them from description, without 'running down to look at the place' before hand; others, who are not quite so sanguine, 'run

down' a hundred miles or so, with results that I am about to chronicle.

Mr. A., a nervous gentleman of my acquaintance, was greatly taken last month by the advertisement of a 'Home Farm on the Eske,' with 'charming views,' and 'the use of a vehicle three days a week.' Of course, I mean that *Mrs. A.* was so taken. *He* had had experience of such things before, and experience in the case of the male makes an impression more or less durable; one of them, however, is that it is better for him (on the whole) to do what his wife tells him; so Mr. A. undertook to 'run down' and look at the Home Farm. He did not quite share in the rural visions, evoked in the minds of his family, of new milk and fresh butter, spacious and cleanly rooms, nightingales under the eaves (they were London people), and poultry at discretion. The price of the place rather alarmed my nervous friend: it was so ridiculously cheap. He pictured to himself a manorial farm-house, of rather too large proportions, with an hereditary ghost, who did not leave the house with its other tenants during the summer months, but remained to harry visitors. He had privately made up his mind to join his family after their first night in the new residence, when he should hear all about it, and then perhaps come home again. That there was *something* wrong he felt confident, though Mrs. A. pooh-poohed the idea, as 'just like his fidgeting,' and said it was obvious the farmer was a gentleman-farmer (and therefore above any paltry deception), because he kept a carriage—that is, the 'vehicle.'

Mr. A. 'ran down' to the station indicated, and walked along the Eske bank for twenty-five minutes, the house having been described as at that distance from the railway. But not a sign did he see of the manorial residence. Having come upon a miller and his man in this locality, he asked to be directed to the 'Home Farm.'

'Never heard of such a place,' was the astounding reply.

'Oh, nonsense,' said A. 'It's advertised in the 'Times' as twenty-five minutes from the railway station, and is to be let for the summer months. It *must* be somewhere here.'

Then the miller slapped his dusty thigh and burst out into a roar. 'Darn me,' said he to his man, 'if it isn't that Canning.'

'Canning is the name of the proprietor,' observed A. with dignity; for he didn't much like his landlord, though only *in posse*, to be called 'that Canning.'

'Ah, then you won't bide there,' said the miller darkly.

'Not bide there? Why not?' said A. (What he thought was, 'Then there is a ghost: there has been murder done in that house.')

'Oh, never you mind,' said the miller. (The caution of the folks on the banks of the Eske is proverbial.) 'I'm not going to get myself into trouble. You'd better go and see for yourself.'

If it had not been broad daylight, A. would have declined to go and see for himself; but as it was high noon, he went on in the direction indicated. He kept looking everywhere about him for some ancient but stately farm-house, with a courtyard and a peacock, or at least with a wide porch shaded by a mighty elm. At last he asked, at what he took for a labourer's cottage, rather above the usual size, for Mr. Canning's, and found to his amazement that he had arrived at his journey's end. This was the 'Home Farm.' It had indeed the number of rooms—(though two of them were underground cellars)—which the advertiser had promised; but they were so small that even the dining-room would only have held Mr. A.'s family in three detachments. Some of the beds had sacking on them instead of a counterpane, and in a London auction room would hardly have been described as 'beds' at all.

The whole of the furniture would have been dear at the price—moderate though it was—of the first week's rent.

When he had gone over the melancholy abode, Mr. A. inquired of his guide (a respectable female peasant), How any one dared to advertise such a place as a summer residence?

'Well, it's none of my business,' she said. 'My master, Mr. Canning, he used to keep his *poultry* here, and as he's taken 'em to the farm, he thought he'd let the place for a month or two to some Londoner.' There were feathers enough in the cottage, A. said, and probably fleas enough, to amply corroborate this statement. Of course he came away—houseless; but I perceive that 'that Canning's' advertisement, headed 'Home Farm on the Banks of the Eske' (which it was not, by the by, being half a mile from it), is still among the 'country residences' in the columns of the 'Times.' Up to this moment the nature of the 'vehicle' in use at the Home Farm has not transpired.

In my next case of summer 'take in' a lady was the sufferer, and a real lady. Lady C. does not trust her husband, Sir Richard, with negotiations so important as those which concern their residence in the country for the summer months; she avers that he settles matters off-hand, and if the proprietress of the house in question is pretty and lady-like, he at once succumbs to her charms, and takes the residence without conditions, or any reference to 'extras.' Therefore she goes in person, and without him, on all such enterprises. On this occasion, 'a mansion on the seaboard of the South of England' had taken her ladyship's fancy.

It had 'a spacious garden,' 'a lawn-tennis ground,' and everything 'in a concatenation according' with its (advertised) pretensions. Lady C., as her custom is, secured on her arrival at the nearest town the services of the local house-agent, and in his company visited the mansion. It turned out to be a villa residence of the third class, and in such a state of disrepair that there was no handle to the front-door bell. The garden had not a single flower in it; the lawn-tennis ground was a patch of rough grass, with an old net upon it that would not have fetched two shillings. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the proprietress, a middle-aged lady of unusually frank manners, was not forgetful of the duties of hospitality. She took an opportunity of beckoning Lady C. aside into a vacant chamber, and offering her a glass of soda and brandy.

I afterwards inquired, as innocently as I could, whether her ladyship had taken this refreshment.

'No, sir, certainly not; but Sir Richard would have taken it, had he been in my place, and very likely the house too.'

Indeed it seems to me that advertisers of this description must trust a good deal to the careless disposition of *Paterfamilias*, and to the chapter of accidents generally, for accomplishing their object, since in the attractions of their houses themselves it is impossible that they can put trust.

The third case of summer quarters is worse than either of the preceding, and both *Pater* and *Materfamilias* were the victims to it.

Mr. and Mrs. D. dwell in one of the most tastefully furnished houses in Belgravia, and the lady is very particular. She likes a new country residence every year, but is difficult to please, from which circumstance it happens that she is often late in getting suited. At the end of July last she was still in want of the 'perfect Paradise' she had planned out for herself, when her roving eye was caught at breakfast time by 'Bijou Residence on the Banks of the Thames' in that fatal column.

'Richard!' cried she, 'I have it at last! We have never yet had a house on the River. The garden is sure to slope down to the very brink—it will be delightful!'

'Very good, my dear; you had better go and see it.'

'Nay, you will go with me, surely,' she pleaded. 'I should not like to close the matter (as I'm sure I shall wish to do) without your approval, and really there is no time to be lost. It is only six miles from Reading——'

'Six miles! Six miles from the nearest railway station!'

'What of that, Charles? We shall have our carriage and horses; you don't want to run up and down from town like a per-

son in the City. I consider the distance from the railway quite an inducement.'

Mrs. D. always thought everything an inducement to take a place until she came to look at it, as Mr. D. was well aware.

He only sighed and said, 'I am at your service.'

They went down by the express to Reading, and drove over by no means by express, but in a local fly to the village named in the advertisement.

I am stating the literal truth when I say that the 'Bijou Residence' turned out to be a semi-detached *almshouse*, the inmates of which had gone to the sea-side—probably to recover from some infectious disorder. Some disappointments are so tremendous that language fails to express our chagrin at them. Mr. D. confessed to me that he was speechless in contemplation of this catastrophe; Mrs. D. only grasped his arm and murmured, 'An almshouse!'

They did not get out of their fly, but merely sat and looked at the proposed dwelling, with a 'wild surprise'—not, however, of the agreeable character with which 'stout Cortez' regarded the Pacific. 'To them,' as the old play-books say, and in the village street, enters a butcher, who at once comprehends the situation. (He had probably seen many victims suffering from the same stroke of fate.)

'Don't you be downhearted, sir,' observed he, addressing Mr. D. with cheerful familiarity; 'I've got the very place as will suit you and your missus.'

'Shall we go and look at it?' inquired D., half suffocated with laughter.

'Oh, yes,' replied his wife, who, though fashionable, I am bound to say, has a strong sense of humour, 'let us follow the butcher. Things can't be worse than the Bijou Residence.'

The man in blue led them to a decent house by the river side, which in their melancholy condition they thought they might as well look over.

'Why, good gracious, it is not furnished!' exclaimed Mrs. D. as they approached nearer.

'No, it is not furnished,' confessed the butcher.

'But, my good man, we only want it for two months!'

'Oh, never mind that,' was the quick reply of this intrepid man; 'we can throw in a few sticks or two in no time, and make you as comfortable as can be.'

'Charles, come away,' said Mrs. D. faintly. And they came away. Her noble spirit was crushed at last. She had stood the Bijou Residence, and she had stood the Butcher; but to be



NEVERMORE.

old that a few sticks of furniture 'thrown in' could make her comfortable for the summer months was too much for her.

The above samples are merely three out of a score of similar experiences with which I am acquainted, of the accommodation summer after summer so enticingly offered us poor Londoners by country advertisers. It would be an act of great public benefit as well as spirit, if some one who has been cheated into 'running down' to look at a 'home farm' or a 'bijou residence' would bring his action against the proprietors thereof for the expenses of his railway journey. I believe any honest jury would award them; and it is certain, whether the law should so decide or not, that the money thus taken out of our pockets is exacted under false pretences.

Debermore.

LADY CLARA may watch and wait,—
He never more will ride to the gate,
In early morn or gloaming late.

Stricken down by a jealous blow,
He lies in the marsh where hemlocks grow,—
Even to death his life-drops flow.

Swift through his brain old memories throng :
He followed a phantom fire too long,
And learned too late the cruel wrong.

The Shoul.

CEREWOOD STREET is so called because for generations it has been celebrated for its manufacture of coffins. Against one jamb of every door rests a highly finished oak coffin with brass mountings and breast-plate; and against the other jamb one of plain deal, rudely put together and having nothing to break the monotony of its sides but four blistered black handles. In this street, day and night, saws grate and squeal, and hammers rouse uncertain hollow sounds.

While walking down the street one sees within the doors great broad-shouldered men reaching up to strike nails in six-foot-fives, or stooping to tack three-foot-twos as they lie across their knees. The little girls rock their dolls to sleep in coffins for cradles. The boys mount small coffins on wheels and race along the street carrying two or three young children, or maybe a pet dog, in their strange chariot.

So rich is this place in its wares that it is a boast of the people who dwell there that if anyone, from a duke to the halfpenny-ice man at the corner, were to drop down dead on the pavement, he could be fittingly accommodated and sent home without the least infringement of the sumptuary law.

For those who are engaged in the business the street is not a gloomy one; they find sources of gratification and solace denied to the mere visitor. Apart from the general advantages of the trade, it affords the means of consoling individual hearts when most tried. At the time the worthy Edmond Gosfort lost his wife, the mother of his grown-up sons, was he not consoled and comforted, and did he not dry his eyes, upon hearing that there was a nice elm shell in stock just the fit? And afterwards, when he mentioned with no little pride the healing consideration, did he not say that for the greatest lady in London an order could not have been executed with greater despatch? When fat Michael Clarke's mother-in-law died, did not Michael come forward and give her the 'old maple nest-egg' as they used to call it? Ever since his marriage it had lain on his hands because of the warp in the lid and the crack in the bottom. As the old lady lay in it, had he not whispered to a neighbour that he never saw on his mother-in-law anything which, to his mind, became her so well, and that 'them two eyesores was going away together!'

For the general public, however, Cerewood Street wore a dismal

and repelling aspect. To such a degree did prejudice act upon the popular instinct that, from one end of the street to the other, there was not a single householder unconnected with funerals or funereal matters—except one.

About midway down the street stood a low dingy shop, the windows and jambs of which displayed several narrow slips of printed paper signifying the willingness of the proprietor to buy or sell second-hand books, or to lend any book on his shelves at the rate of one penny the day.

The window was almost completely blinded up with books. From the outside no one could see into the shop. A barricade of cases at the door prevented side-long glances penetrating. A dull, forgotten air hung about the place. In the uncleaned windows cobwebs spread from one row of books to another. The dead flies of many years lay like husks of black corn between leaves and panes of glass, or half buried in deep dust on the show-board and inner edges of the sash.

The interior of the shop disclosed a wilderness of books and dust. The open space before the counter measured no more than eight feet by six. All the rest was books, books, books, and a little old man. The little old man owned the business, and had, because of singular tastes displayed by him, been called the Ghoul.

He was low-sized and thin, with a large bald forehead mottled with red, a prominent nose, grey-blue eyes, and heavy hands badly articulated. His dress consisted of a long rusty black coat, rusty black waistcoat open half-way down his bust, exposing a shirt of dubious purity, and black threadbare small-clothes. People judged him to be about sixty-five years of age.

Absolutely nothing was known of his history. Some said he had never been married; but there were rumours remote and weird to the contrary. No one in Cerewood Street had ever known, or heard of, or seen a member of his family; but against hasty conclusions from this it was urged that no one had ever explored the upper regions of his house. His neighbours on either side were fiercely at variance as to whether there were or were not any occupant but himself. On one side it was averred that words, and moans, and cries had been heard; while on the other it was held that such sounds existed only in fancy; or, at most, were but the sawings and hammerings twisted into the service of mystery by a willing imagination.

The Ghoul had taken the house thirty years before. He had entered into occupation at midnight: no one about the place had seen him come, but far into the morning those on both sides had

heard his boxes and bales of books being tossed hither and thither. For a week the shutters remained up. When the shop was opened, the arrangements were precisely the same as those seen thirty years afterwards.

Neither the rear nor front windows of the house were ever opened. Blinds covered them completely. The neighbours on the opposite side of the street now and then saw a skylight raised. But it never moved while the Ghoul was in the shop. If it were open when a shower came on, he went up and shut it. To anyone present at the time he would say:—

‘By gad, sir! I have left the skylight open, and there’s the rain—there’s the rain. Excuse me a minute till I let it down.’

As often as the Ghoul wanted to be emphatic he prefaced what he had to say with ‘By gad, sir!’ paying no regard to the sex of the person in whose presence he spoke. This habit had inspired several lady customers of his with superstitious notions.

‘For,’ said one, ‘how could he say “sir” to me? And I believe he’s talking to Some One Else,’ with a shudder and an uneasy look round, ‘the whole time.’ And truth to tell, the eyes of the Ghoul were often absent from the place and the people present and the business in hand.

He indulged, too, in a habit of soliloquising which affrighted the timid sex. He had frequently been found apostrophising his shadow, or a pile of books, or a pot of paste; and the worst feature of these soliloquies happened to be that the only intelligible words ever caught by anyone coming in unawares were these self-same ones, ‘By gad, sir!’ all the rest being a wild chaos of articulation. This made the women shiver and turn pale.

‘No one’—said a thin woman who always wore a drab dress and a cap with strings untied—‘no one can make out a word of what he says at them times, except a sort of curse; and no Christian human being can understand him. What, then, can he be doing but talking to Some One in their own language? in which you know, my dear, curses is like blessings, or how-dye-dos.’

But by far the most disquieting habit of the Ghoul was one also indulged in when he believed himself to be alone. It consisted in bending his body until his head lay on a level with his knees, and then walking or rather jumping forward on his heels, muttering and mumbling the while in hissing tones. Once or twice when surprised by a sympathetic neighbour, and asked if he suffered from pain or cramp, he had answered with some little confusion that he did not feel ill, adding by way of explanation:—

‘By gad, sir! I was only thinking—only thinking.’

'But,' observed the thin woman of the drab dress and untied strings, 'that was no way for a Christian man to think. It might be all very well for an elephant or a circus clown to go jigging about with their heads between their knees, because that was their way of getting a living; but if a man's thoughts made him behave that way, what must his thoughts be like?'

Another woman gave it as her opinion that the Ghoul was not at such moments thinking at all. 'For,' she urged, 'couldn't he sit down and have a pint of beer and a think comfortable, and not go on like that, hopping about on his heels as if he was a frog in a fit, or a water-wagtail in liquor?'

This woman further gave it as her opinion that at such times, instead of thinking, he was trying to resist the efforts of Some One to drag him down Somewhere by the head, and that the voice of a good Christian made Some One loose his hold. The result of these disturbing peculiarities was a conviction in the breast of every woman of Cerewood Street that the Ghoul ought to be put to death, and that if burning were practicable it would be the best manner of getting him out of the way.

It must not, however, be supposed that the old second-hand bookseller got the name he bore from these strange and chilling habits, or from the obscure privacy in which his life was passed. The people surrounding him were nicer in their application of words than to be guilty of such an abuse of language. Many years before they had fixed this title upon him they had enjoyed the benefits of his library and cheap books. They had educated themselves high above haphazard or levity with words. They had called him the Ghoul deliberately, and after much consideration. They applied the name to him because no subject of conversation so excited and absorbed his attention as details of mangled bodies, brutal and ferocious murders, and cruel physical sufferings, the relation of which made the blood run cold and the body quiver.

Every evening a little knot of men gathered into the Ghoul's back shop, and there discussed in the most elaborate and exhaustive method the latest murder in the city or provinces, or France, or places still further afield. All the particular circumstances and incidents, from the colour of the victim's hair as a boy, down to his appearance when found as a man under the blind arch, were expanded and dwelt upon, until the brows of the listeners grew damp with terror. An execution, warm from the pen of a glowing writer, paralysed the old man with shuddering excitement. The account from China of how they broke a conspirator's knees out of the sockets, or drove greased oak wedges under the toe-nails,

caused the old man to whine about the room in an epileptic rapture.

Most of these horrors were purveyed by the Ghoul himself, but occasionally the honest tradesmen could give facts which the Ghoul conjured into terrors. There were often blank periods when contemporaneous criminals failed to do deeds of sufficient atrocity to tickle the old man into enthusiasm. Then he fell back upon his store of books. He loved voyages and travels best after strongly flavoured accounts of ecclesiastical wars, their strifes and punishments; and he was minutely familiar with the form and history of every torture from the earliest records down to those of the passing day.

It was, however, chiefly because of the interest he took in corpses that he was called the Ghoul, and a belief obtained generally that he had been led to adopt Cerewood Street as a place of residence because it afforded him a good opportunity of pursuing his favourite study and obtaining recondite facts.

Through the honest tradesmen of the street he heard of all kinds of deformities and malformations. Now it was the vanity of a poor hunchback who, though measuring only 3 ft. 8 in., put a clause in his will commanding that he should be buried in a coffin of full proportions. Now it was a rich banker who, upon the eve of insolvency, had slain himself with a swift and awful poison which warped the body into such a bow, that the coffin had to be 2 ft. 10 in. in height. They told him of the exact appearance of the criminal, as they had told him of the exact appearance of his prey, and the precise spot where the bullet-mark had been. From the ghastly nature of the tales narrated in the evenings, this little back shop had by the women been called the Morgue, and in the end it was always spoken of as the Morgue, and never as the Ghoul's back shop.

The most singular of all things about the little old man, whose name happened to be Isaac Phayre, was that no matter how interesting the circumstances, or provoking the facts, he never could be induced to show any ingenuity in the case where a woman was the sufferer.

'And so,' he would say, when some one brought him a piece of intelligence about the strange discovery of a woman's body, 'they found the poor thing lying in the ooze with a blue silk scarf round her waist and a flower in her bosom? Poor thing! Poor thing! Poor thing! Love, no doubt. Love, or jealousy, or despair, no doubt. Ah, these women suffer a deal! a deal we never dream of!' and so would pass from the subject.

There existed three stages in the popular feminine belief re-

specting Isaac Phayre, the Ghoul. First: that it was not, or had not been, all right with him. Second: that he had murdered a woman. Third: that he was in the habit of murdering women, and that all his time not devoted to the shop was spent in committing such assassinations as were likely to pass for ever undiscovered, because of the vast knowledge possessed by him in such matters.

'Look here,' said a bare-armed woman talking solemnly over her tub of clothes, to a few neighbours who had come to hear the oracle, or get her famous recipe for the chin cough, 'I do believe that Ghoul could murder you without your ever being able to know it, and make away with your body and your husband never miss you.'

'That's my belief too,' agreed a serious elderly lady, charging her knitting needles, and shaking her head gravely at the tub.

'I don't know about our husbands not missing us,' doubted a comely matron of three-and-twenty. 'I think if I wasn't waiting at the door for my John when he came back from work, he'd miss me.'

'Not if you was murdered by the Ghoul,' declared the oracle in a chilling and warning voice, as who should say, 'Remember, in doubting the oracle on this point, you are at once impious and offering defiance to the Ghoul.'

'Not if you was murdered by the Ghoul,' echoed the elderly lady with the knitting, in despairing tones, as who should say, 'These inexperienced young wives put so much faith in their young husbands, they grow over-bold against the rest of the world; but time will alter this with them.'

In fine, the conviction largely prevailed that Isaac Phayre was a murderer, and to the minds of many he still employed his midnight hours in occult and perfidious methods of bloodshedding. The inhabitants of the street felt secure, 'For,' they argued, 'he'd never touch one of us that know him, because then he'd be found out in no time.' So, though the people had a creeping awe of him, they felt no personal fears.

One Monday morning the dwellers in Cerewood Street were struck dumb with amazement to find the shop of the Ghoul still closed at breakfast-time. Such a thing had never occurred before. The use of hammers and saws was suspended for thought and speculation. The women stood at their doors, their hands under their aprons, and canvassed the matter across the street. The children squeezed their faces sideways against the shutters of the old-book shop, and endeavoured to see through the chinks, but got only cut cheeks and eyebrows for their trouble. The women

held that at last he had been detected in his midnight crimes, and was now in the hands of the police. The men shook their heads, and James Gort, the chief coffin-maker, muttered 'A fit, a fit. Some one ought to break in and see.'

While debate was at its height, the door of the second-hand-book shop opened, and Isaac Phayre stepped into the street.

He closed the door after him and locked it; and, with drooping head and downcast eyes, walked a short distance along the footway, then, looking neither to the right nor left, he crossed the pavement, and directed his steps towards the shop of James Gort, the chief coffin-maker of the street.

As the Ghoul approached, James retired. He felt somewhat aggrieved because Isaac Phayre was not in that fit he had arranged for him.

'Good morning, James,' said the Ghoul, raising his head for a brief moment.

'Good morning, Mr. Isaac,' responded the other. Whatever the people may have thought of the Ghoul, they always addressed him respectfully.

'Can I speak a few words with you'—he glanced at James's wife and the intelligent apprentice, Michael—'in private? I have something to say to you.'

'What can he want?' mentally queried James. 'I wonder, is he expecting a sheriff's officer? Well, if so, I wouldn't see him short of a few pounds.' Aloud he said, 'Step into the back shop. I'll be with you presently.' He wished to have just half a word with his wife.

'Don't have anything to do with it!' whispered the woman in a warning voice, as soon as the Ghoul had disappeared. 'It's some bad job or other.'

'What do you mean?' demanded the worthy man in perplexity.

'He wants a coffin.'

'Eh!' cried he in astonishment. 'How can he want a coffin when he's not dead? He hadn't the fit, or he had it and got out of it.'

'He wants a coffin,' repeated his wife emphatically, as if she uttered a revealed fact.

'He did look uncommon like polished pine,' broke in Michael, the intelligent apprentice, with a glance of confirmation.

'Eh?' muttered the man in bewilderment, 'what is that you say?'

'I saw his eyes running over the stock like a jack-plane on a soaped plank; and if my indentures is to be of any use to me, I

think I ought to know the look of a customer now, and the kind of article that would suit him.'

'But,' began the master in a tone plainly indicating that faith in himself had been greatly shaken, and that he found himself in a contemptible position, 'what on earth can he want of a coffin?'

'Want!' sneered his wife close to his ear. 'He was at his old work again last night, and he can't get rid of the body. That's what it is, and you'd better take care of what you have to do with the matter.'

'Such nonsense!' he protested, with an attempt to smile.

'You'd better be careful!' were the last words he heard from his wife as he followed the Ghoul.

As soon as the coffin-maker entered, the little old man said in an unsteady voice:—

'James, will you shut the door, please.'

The other complied, and as he did so he felt a cold shiver pass down his back. There might be something, after all, in what his wife and Michael had been saying. When he came back from the door, the Ghoul was rubbing his bald head with a red cotton handkerchief which seemed damp, and which was almost wholly concealed in his large lean right hand.

Red and damp! Of course red was the natural colour of the handkerchief, but the natural colour could conceal something else red also; and with what was the old man's handkerchief damp?

'Now, Mr. Isaac, you may speak. No one can hear.'

The little old bookseller sat down, let his damp handkerchief fall into his hat, threw his body forward, and having placed his elbows on his knees dropped his chin into the hollow of his palms.

'James,' he whispered, 'I want you to do something for me.'

'And what may it be?' asked James apprehensively, as he twirled his thumbs and regarded the bent figure before him with grave disquietude.

'A little job.'

'A little job!' echoed the coffin-maker aghast. 'In the way of business?'

'Well, yes; in the way of business partly, and partly in the way of friendship. I want you to do the job and say nothing about it. Do you understand?'

'Ah!' cried the other, falling back against the wall and trembling in every joint.

'Of course you won't refuse an old neighbour. I ask you to say nothing about it because the case is so peculiar. The shape must be different from the ordinary one.'

'Oh!' moaned the appalled coffin-maker, 'I really—I really—I

beg your pardon—I'd rather not. For—excuse me a moment,—and, opening the door in desperate haste, he rushed out and stood pale and trembling before his wife and Michael the apprentice.

‘Well?’ inquired his wife, as though she had said, ‘Are you now quite satisfied I was right?’

‘He wants me to make one, and of an odd shape, and to say nothing about it.’

‘What did I tell you?’ cried the wife triumphantly.

‘I thought polished pine was the thing. Did he mention polished pine, sir?’ demanded the apprentice.

‘No. What on earth ought we to do?’

‘Send for the police,’ suggested his wife with prompt decision.

‘For a neighbour?’

‘For a murderer.’

‘I couldn’t.’

‘You must.’

‘I won’t.’

‘Then I will; that’s all.’

‘You shall not.’

‘Michael, run round to the station and tell them we have a murderer in the back shop. They’d better send four.’

‘Michael, if you stir a foot out of where you are, I’ll make you suffer for it.’

The voices of the two had been considerably raised as the dialogue went on. At this point the door of the back shop opened, and Isaac the Ghoul stepped out and stood between the husband and wife. He drew his little form up to its full height and looked reproachfully at the coffin-maker.

‘James,’ he said with sadness and dignity, ‘I did not think you would treat me in this way. I intended you should be paid fairly—ay, more than fairly. I ask you to do a little thing for me, and you fly from me; fearing, I dare say, that I am too poor to be a profitable customer. I am disappointed, James.’ There was a quiet assertion of superiority in the little man’s tones, and the coffin-maker stammered and hesitated, began two or three apologetic sentences, and abandoned them unfinished.

Mrs. Gort was not so easily confused, and broke out with:—

‘You know very well, Mr. Phayre, this is no kind of thing to ask honest folk to do. I wonder you don’t consider that you might get innocent people into trouble.’

‘Trouble! What do you mean, madam? How can your husband, more than any other man, get into trouble by executing an order for me, if I pay him fairly?’

The manner of the Ghoul had its influence on James. He

already felt doubts of the infallibility of his wife. 'And where is the body?' he demanded.

A strong convulsive spasm passed through the frame of the old man. He took out the suspiciously damp red pocket-handkerchief and applied it with an uncertain hand to his face. His lips trembled and his voice was unsteady. 'Yonder,' he answered, pointing to the old-book shop.

James's faith in his wife's acuteness was still more shaken.

'She died this morning at six o'clock. It was grey dawn. I was sitting by her side, for I knew she was dying.'

The hard look was melting out of the eyes of Mr. James. The intelligent apprentice leaned against a post to listen. Isaac Phayre spoke as though describing to himself things passing before his eyes at a distance rather than as if he were addressing anyone.

'Upon the beam under the skylight I always put crumbs, and the sparrows used to come when the skylight was up, and while I was in the shop the sparrows amused her. This morning, when the first sparrow came, although she raised her eyes, she did not move her hand. It was dead. The other had been dead for thirty-five years.'

'Thirty-five years!' cried James and his wife in astonishment.

'Yes, thirty-five years. It's thirty years since I came to this street, and five years before that she got the first stroke, and two years after followed the second, and since that time she has never spoken a word, nor could she use any of her limbs but her right arm and hand.'

The old man paused a moment and passed his damp red pocket-handkerchief under his eyebrows.

'Poor thing!' ejaculated Mrs. James completely softened. 'Was she old?'

'Yes; very.'

'Older than you?'

'Yes; twenty years.'

'Twenty years. Why, she must have been quite old when she was married?'

'Only seventeen. She came up from the country, I often heard, as gay and fair a girl as need be. She was sixteen then, and the next year she was married. I remember her well when she was twenty-four, and from the first day I can recollect we were never separated for a week—never.'

'And when, Mr. Isaac,' pursued the woman in perplexity, 'were you married?'

'Married!' he exclaimed sadly; 'I never was married, Mrs. James, though I was near it once. My marriage was all arranged,

when she,' waving his hand towards the old-book shop, 'got the first stroke. After that, you know, it couldn't be. There was no one to take charge of her, and I was not able to afford a nurse. Oh, that was a bitter time. But I was young and hopeful then. Now I am old, and she was the last link - the very last link, Mrs. James. My poor old mother, good-bye!' and he covered his eyes.

'His mother!'

The good woman crossed the shop quickly and caught one of his clumsy hands in hers, and stroked it gently, and led him into the room behind, saying in a low voice, 'Poor Mr. Isaac! Come in, sir. And so it was your poor old mother. Who could have thought it! Who could have thought it! Never fear for James, he'll do all you want and more; and I'll get some breakfast ready for you in a minute.'

The news soon spread, and all the people who had said or thought uncharitable things about the second-hand bookseller entered into a rivalry of atonement. Surprise and sympathy and admiration filled the air, and no one could do too much for the strange old man. The women who had been hardest against him were now foremost with consoling words and offices. They urged their husbands and sons to see that the stricken man wanted nothing. Several of them crept noiselessly up to the death chamber at the top of the house. They found it wonderfully neat and comfortable, but they put things in more familiar order, and some of the young girls brought sweet-smelling flowers and placed them here and there in silent corners.

The body of the old woman was doubled together with age, but upon her face rested a simple, childlike expression. As Isaac gazed for the last time on the features which had been so long familiar to him, he murmured that she appeared more like what he remembered her when he was a little boy than he had seen her look since.

'She was very sweet when she was young,' said he, 'and I often heard she had many lovers. Who would think that now?'

'No one,' answered James softly, and added, 'Why, Isaac, a grand-daughter of yours might have lovers now.'

'Ay,' sighed the old man. A new light came into his eyes, the light of sad, tearless despair. 'That is true,' he continued after a while, 'that is true, my friend. My grand-daughter! But it's no good looking back now. Might have been! Might have been! You can't know how sweet my future looked once. Might have been! James, that phrase is the deadliest dagger memory bears.' And shading his face, he wept.

Quips and Cranks at our Club Window.

BY AN OLD ENTHUSIAST AND A YOUNG CYNIC.

No. XLV.—IN THE LIBRARY.

I.

BLESSINGS on books ! that ever show
What ancient wits and sages taught,
And pour in bounteous overflow
The ever living stream of thought !

II.

Blessings on books ! while they are ours,
And souls are reached through ears and eyes,
We're equals of th' immortal powers,
We're partners in the earth and skies !

No. XLVI.—A POOR FELLOW'S DEFIANCE.

I.

I'm driven to the wall, and the world is my foe,
Whatever I do is a failure most flat,
Yet my soul is my own,
And I'm not overthrown :
What signifies that ? *ay, what signifies that ?*

II.

I've nothing to-day for to-morrow's great needs,
I wait upon fortune that never comes pat ;
But if, though I'm poor,
I can laugh and endure,
What signifies that ? *ay, what signifies that ?*

No. XLVII.—HOW TO DO IT.

TICKLE the public and make it grin !
The more you tickle, the more you'll win !
But teach the public—you'll never grow rich,
But live like a beggar and die in a ditch !

QUIPS AND CRANES.

NO. XLVIII.—THE LADY AND THE SWINE.

IN OLD NURSERY RHYME WITH A MODERN APPLICATION.

FIRST PART.

I.

THERE was a lady loved a swine,
‘*Honey my dear,*’ quoth she,
‘My darling hog, wilt thou be mine?’
‘*Hoogh! Hoogh!*’ grunted he.

II.

‘I’ll build thee up a sty of gold,
Honey my dear,’ quoth she,
‘To shield thee from the winter cold.’
‘*Hoogh! Hoogh!*’ grunted he.

III.

‘I’ll feed thee on the daintiest fare,
Honey my dear,’ quoth she,
‘On nuts and acorns and truffles rare.’
‘*Hoogh! Hoogh!*’ grunted he.

IV.

‘Now tell me true, if thou’lt be mine,
Honey my dear,’ quoth she,
‘Thou handsome, shapely, noble swine!’
‘*Hoogh! Hoogh!*’ grunted he.

V.

‘Love me well, for I’ve a plan,
Honey my dear,’ quoth she,
‘To make thee a princely gentleman!’
‘*Hoogh! Hoogh!*’ grunted he.

SECOND PART.

I.

The swine accepted the lady gay,
‘*Hoogh! Hoogh!*’ grunted he,
And they were married the very next day,
‘*Honey my dear!*’ quoth she.

II.

‘I am the master, and I am the lord,
Hoogh! Hoogh!’ grunted he;
‘Thou must be second at bed and board.’
‘Prithee, why so?’ quoth she.

III.

Thou shalt not dine on bread and milk,
Hoogh! Hoogh! grunted he,
 'Nor hope to dress in velvet or silk.'
 'Oh, don't be cruel!' quoth she.

IV.

'My food is good enough for thine,
Hoogh! Hoogh! grunted he,
 'And thou on the swish and the swash shalt dine!'
 'Tis a very hard lot!' quoth she.

V.

'And thou shalt sleep on the muck and the straw,
Hoogh! Hoogh! grunted he,
 'And my slightest wish shall be thy law!'
 'If it must, it must!' quoth she.

VI.

'A gentleman I shall never become,
Hoogh! Hoogh! grunted he,
 'So prithee, Madam Swine, be dumb!'
 'I will if I must!' quoth she.

VII.

'I'm rightly served to have married a swine!'
'Hoogh! Hoogh!' grunted he.
 "'Tis only until death I'm thine,
I'll die to-night! quoth she.'

No. XLIX.—THE PASSING YEARS.

Why should we care for the passing years?
 They bring us little our souls would crave;
 Nor health, nor strength, nor perfect peace,
 Nothing but passage to the grave!
 So let them pass! they can do no more
 Than hurry us on to the destined end;
 Is it for *that* we should deplore?
 Why should we think so! Time's our friend.

No. L.—RECIPE FOR A 'WEAKLY' REVIEW.

ATTACK the high in place
 To gratify the base;
 Deny whatever's good
 In man or womanhood,

QUIPS AND CRANKS.

And sneer at all that's great
 In letters or the State,
 And do your very best,
 With or without a jest,
 'To bite and snarl and pander
 To vulgar love of Slander ;
 That's all you have to do
 To found a foul Review,
 And gather in the cash,
 Until the final smash,
 When biters shall be bit,
 And malice without wit
 Shall find few fools to try it,
 And fewer still to buy it !

No. LI.—ENCORE UN JOUR.

ANOTHER day ! another night !
 Flying, flying, fled !
 Another link from the dwindling chain
 That drags us to the dead !
 What, after all, are life and death
 But names for Toil and Rest ?
 Something and nothing ; sleep perchance
 Betwixt the two, the best !

No. LII.—GREEN LEAVES AND YELLOW.

THE spring-time buds, the summer blooms,
 Aid autumn to be mellow ;
 Their promise under fresh green leaves,
 Performance under yellow.
 Among the green leaves seek the rose,
 The lily, and the pansy ;
 Among the yellow look for grapes,
 And press them to your fancy.

No. LIII.—WHAT THE TRUE POET TEACHES.

HE teaches love to suffer and be pure,
 That virtue conquers if it but endure,
 That noblest gifts should serve the noblest ends,
 That he is richest who the most befriends ;
 That through life's journey, dark or bright the day,
 Fate's not unkind whatever men may say,
 If Goodness walks companion of their way.

The World Well Lost.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

CHAPTER XXV.

PLAYING AT PROVIDENCE.

WHAT the Tower ladies knew, the world at large was invited to discuss; and the facts that, not only were Mr. Arthur Machell and Miss Muriel Smith engaged—and Lady Machell as cross as the cats about it, as Baby said to her friend Mrs. Lucraft—but that Derwent and Hilda had kissed each other in full daylight on the lawn, were public property before the week was out.

In due time the budget came round to the foretime Browns of Clapton, to whom scraps of personal gossip were precious. But it came with the rider that everything had been broken off between Arthur and Muriel because of the want of money; and that Lady Machell had been, as Jemima put it, 'that mad with her daughter and young Mr. Derwent as to box his ears well for him, though he had saved little Miss Peacock's life at the risk of his own.' The snowball set rolling gathered greatly by the way, and by the time it reached Paumelle House was full of sticks and straws that had never belonged to it in the beginning. And this was one of them.

Wilfrid, when appealed to by his bride elect, was explicit and emphatic enough on both points. There was no engagement at all—now—between his brother and Miss Smith, he said grimly. How could they marry when neither had sixpence, and when the families on both sides were opposed? Love in a cottage, and the total disregard of social necessities for the sake of a pretty face, were all very well in trashy novels, he said with a contemptuous sneer, but a man's life has to be founded on a different basis; and Arthur had too much sense to make a fool of himself when fairly put to it. He would see with their eyes before long, if indeed he had not already. As for Derwent and Hilda, he pricked that bubble with his lance very disdainfully. The child had fallen, and was in a little danger undoubtedly; and young Smith had done a gallant thing to help her; but good heavens! a lad may do a manly thing to save a child whom he has known all his life, without the necessity of any love affair between them; and the idea of Hilda with a lover at all was not only absurd but revolting. She

was scarcely out of the schoolroom yet, and it was sacrilege to connect her name with that of any man in the world.

Nevertheless, for all his repudiation, he was bound to admit that something had been said and done to justify the first flakes of the snowball; a mere child's escapade—no more—and made vastly too much of by those two chattering old women who never knew when to hold their tongues, and with whom all mole-hills were mountains. And in like manner he could not deny that Arthur and Muriel had been—well, engaged, if Jemima liked to call such folly as that an engagement, he did not—but that even the cloudy relations which might have existed between them were now at an end, and the cause of the break was—want of money.

This want of money as the hitch in the smooth running of the silken thread pained Jemima. She had a tender heart, and took as much interest in love stories as she did in those of murder, ghosts, and haunted houses. Moreover, she liked Muriel who, though she had never been intimate, had been always kind and gentle, neither snubbing, nor patronising, nor yet courting her; and she admired Derwent, though he was so standoffish, and treated her as if she had been Catskins, and not good enough to speak to. Also she had a very friendly feeling for Arthur, of whom she would have been considerably fonder, and not nearly so much afraid, had he been the elder son and standing in Wilfrid's place—she called it standing in his shoes. So that on the whole her not very solid being was considerably disturbed, and she was what an American would have called, mixed up. More than this, she was not selfish and did not care to keep all the good things to herself. She longed to be able to play Providence to these unlucky ones so far as she could, and to make of the present ravelled web a seemly wedding garment. It was the fledgling's first flutter of its unaccustomed wings; the beginning of independence from the dawning consciousness of possession, which however Wilfrid would take care should not last long nor yet be freely exercised.

It wanted but a short time to the wedding; and with a true instinct of how things would be after, Jemima felt that if she wanted to do anything for her future brother-in-law and the girl whom he loved, she had better do it now. When she was fairly 'turned off'—irrevocably the Captain's wife—she knew in her secret soul that she would be sold into bondage, and kept there. Wherefore, asking leave of no one, not even consulting her mother and certainly not her future husband, she wrote a letter to Arthur beginning, 'Dear Lieutenant Machell,' wherein she offered him a

sum of ten thousand pounds which her father had just given her 'to do what she liked with.' If that would do to start him and Miss Muriel, so that they could marry when they had a mind, he was heartily welcome to it, she said in her small thin scratchy handwriting, where every letter had its loop, and all the tails ran through all the heads like so many meshes in a net. She did not know much about money matters, she went on to say, as she had never had the handling of it; but she had heard her father say that he began life on five pounds borrowed, and as he had done so well perhaps Lieutenant Machell would follow suit. And she was sure, she said, that if he wanted to go into business, her father would help him; for no man knew more of the city roughs and rigs, and ins and outs than he did. She begged the Lieutenant not to tell of her to anyone—underlined four times—as she did not want to be talked over, and she had done it only for his good.

It was not like Jemima to be underhand. On the contrary, save perhaps that giggling eye-flirtation with the lawyer's clerk from the window, she had never had a secret of any kind from her mother, and enjoyed her life only in proportion to that mother's participation. The two in concert certainly kept a host of minor things from the husband and father; it being part of Mrs. Brown's creed that it doesn't do to tell everything to the gentlemen, gentlemen being a world of bother at the best of times, and the more dust ladies can throw in their eyes the better for everyone and the quieter things go on; but then they were together, and deception shared by two does not scrape the conscience so hard as when it is single. Now however fear was already making its mark, and domination was bringing forth its fruits, if not exactly of deceit yet something very like it. Moreover, being a daughter of Eve, the slight flavour of naughtiness in her virtue had its charm, good girl as she was; and she sent her note and waited for the reply with almost as much excitement as she had felt during that famous scene in the conservatory.

If only she could play Providence to these people, so much her superiors in all save the mere possession of pence, and feel that their happiness was owing to her! Like a child making believe at motherhood, the idea of patronage and endowment to a depressed and crumpled little creature like herself, who had never snapped the leading strings, never exerted her will, and seldom had a will to exert, had inexpressible fascination. She almost wished that she had sent the money anonymously; but if she had, the Lieutenant would not have thanked her for his happiness; and of what good to be a Providence if you are not known as such

and blessed accordingly? Few people care to keep the left hand stranger to the right, and *Jemima* was not one of the few.

The reply to her letter came in a different form from that which she had anticipated. She had looked for a nice little note from her brother-in-law designate, which she would receive clandestinely and read behind locked doors; feeling delightfully frightened, yet not guilty—only important and burdened with a secret that would be sure to offend the Captain if it were told, but that did not offend her own conscience. Instead of this, *Arthur*, who had no desire to enter into an underhand correspondence with his brother's future wife, himself rode up to the house to thank the good-natured little thing, as he mentally called her, for her generous intentions, and to put an end once and for ever to the idea that he could possibly accept such help as she proposed. He had resolved to make his own life, as a man should; and his brother's wealthy connections were to be of no use to him.

'You are very good,' he said to *Jemima*, standing with her in the bay of the drawing-room window; 'but I cannot accept your generous offer. All the same I thank you heartily, and shall never forget your kindness.'

'La, Mr. *Arthur*, don't say that; I knew that you were as good as given to Miss *Muriel*, but that you had some bother about money, and it was all off again.'

'Not quite off,' he said smiling; 'only delayed—'

'I'm glad of that,' she answered; 'but you needn't wait if you haven't a mind. Pa has come down very handsomely all round, and I couldn't, if I tried, want more than I have.'

'Very glad to hear it; so much the better for you!' he cried cheerfully.

'But if I don't want this ten thousand—and I don't, mind you—why shouldn't you take it for you and Miss *Muriel* to begin housekeeping with?' said *Jemima*, with the air of a person reasoning out the matter logically. 'I couldn't make a better use of it, and you'll be all the better for it. Do, Mr. *Arthur*! now, do! I do wish you would take it! It would make everything come square, and I should like to have Miss *Muriel* for a sister.'

'You are very good,' said *Arthur* almost tenderly; 'but indeed I could not. I will find a way yet to make *Muriel* my wife without robbing you, dear Miss de *Paumelle*; but do not think that I do not thank you. I do from my heart.'

'La!' thought *Jemima*, 'how nicely he talks, and how well he looks when he smiles!'

And at this she sighed. Her Captain did not talk so nicely nor smile so often, nor look so well as his brother when he did.

'But if you won't be helped over your stile—and I'm sure to goodness I wish you would, Mr. Arthur—can anything be done for Mr. Derwent Smith?' she asked after a pause. 'Cannot he be put to something in the city through my pa? and then,' giggling, 'he and Hilda'—Arthur winced a little at the familiarity; it was all right, he knew, but it grated nevertheless—'could make a match of it, as by all accounts they'd like to do if they had the chance.'

'I am afraid that Derwent is hardly the kind of man for business,' said Arthur, with an almost imperceptible shade of haughtiness in his voice and air. 'And I don't think my mother would quite like such a position for Hilda.'

'But I am a city man's daughter,' said Jemima, opening her eyes. These refined distinctions were hieroglyphics to her whereof she had not the key.

'You are different,' Arthur answered gallantly.

So she was, looking at the thickness of her gilding; but naturally this was not the view of things which she herself took.

'Well, I suppose I am,' she said simply. 'I can't see it myself, but everyone seems to think it; so I suppose it is so. At least it's what the Captain and Lady Machell seem to say,' with a fatuous little laugh which made Arthur pity Wilfrid. But he was a Machell, and with the Machell social heroism; so he answered smiling:—

'They are right;' and looked into her face pleasantly.

Jemima coloured and hung her head.

'La, Mr. Arthur,' she said shyly, and crumpled up the end of her pale blue necktie.

After a moment she took up her parable where she had dropped it.

'And you will not really let me give you that money? I haven't the smallest mite of use for it; indeed I haven't,' she said earnestly.

'No, no; a thousand thanks, my dear, but I can manage quite well,' was his reply, his tone, if always gentle, too resolute to allow anyone more observant than Jemima to continue the contest; but she was both obtuse and pertinacious, as weak people generally are.

'Just think what it would be!' she said, as if he had never realised such a future. 'You and Miss Muriel married, and not to be parted again—think of it, Mr. Arthur!'

'Yes, it would be great happiness,' he said, a certain wistful far-away expression coming into his darkened eyes. 'But believe me,' he added, 'it would be absolutely impossible for me to

buy even such happiness at this price. I must be sufficient for myself.'

She turned to him with what was for her passionate beseeching.

'Ah, but do!' she cried, clasping her hands. 'Do now, Mr. Arthur! It would be so nice to me to feel that I had made you both so happy! And oh my, you would be happy!'

Something in her words struck her. The thin little crust of pretence in her own future happiness with her stern and undemonstrative Captain, which she honestly tried to maintain, broke under the consciousness of the intensity, the reality that would be between Arthur and Muriel; and covering her face she burst into tears.

'My dear!' cried Arthur, moved, startled, sorry, and man-like understanding nothing of the hidden meaning of what he saw. 'What makes you cry like this? Do not be so sorry for us; we shall do very well in time. It is only a question of a few months' waiting,' lightly; 'we are not going to forsake each other, and it will all come right.'

He took her hand as he said this and kissed it. The Machells were not a kissing family, though he was more given that way than the rest; and the brothers were not men to salute each other's wives with or without sanction. They did not cherish sentimental fictions; and the lawfulness of fraternal familiarity to sisters-in-law, because of their sacredness, was a fiction which they appraised at its right value. It was then as a concession to natural emotion, and the desire to soothe the hysterical outburst of a would-be benefactress, that Arthur took that meagre little hand and carried it to his lips gallantly.

'La, Mr. Arthur!' said Jemima, a grateful smile shining through her tears; 'how nice you are to me! how nice you are to everyone!'

'Am I?' he said laughing; 'I think it is you who are nice to me.'

'Oh, my!' cried Jemima, first turning red and then white, as a look of real terror came like pain into her face.

Arthur followed her eyes, and saw beneath the window, looking up to them as they were standing there performing their little comedy, his brother Wilfrid and her father old Brown.

Few things are more unpleasant than to be caught, doing nothing wrong, but set in a snare of doubtful appearances. Arthur and Jemima in the bay of the drawing-room window alone, she with her handkerchief to her eyes, he carrying her hand to his lips, looked queer enough to the two men standing on the gravel

below; and both Wilfrid and old Brown were justified—the one in his haughty surprise that his affianced bride should dare to show his brother so much confidence, and what the deuce was that brother doing here at all?—the other in his flush of apoplectic anger that the brother of his future son-in-law should be so dashed impertinent, and what was his girl about that she hadn't spirit enough to treat him as he deserved?

Meanwhile, Jemima felt as if she was in a dream, or rather hoped that she was; and Arthur himself, albeit conscious of no evil, wished that Wilfrid and old Brown had not seen her cry nor him kiss her hand. As things were, it could not be helped; and all that they had to do now was to put a good face on it, and not make bad worse by looking ashamed or as if they had done anything that they wished to hide. Which was easy enough to a man who has his equality of manhood and consciousness of strength to help him; perhaps also the habit of doing things which he would have to defend if proclaimed on the housetop; but difficult to a timid little girl accustomed to be herded, and to whom concealment is as rare as blame.

The trial however came; and the two men entered the room; Jemima feeling that she had to face not her lover so much as her master, and Arthur wondering what he should say if 'Wilfrid cut up rough,' and Jemima did not want the truth to be told. But nothing was said for the moment. Wilfrid's sense of family dignity forbade him to make cause against his brother before the Brown de Paumelles, even though the daughter of that despised and utilised house was to be his wife; and old Brown followed as his future son-in-law led, and would not have held up even his little finger if the Captain had told him to lower his hand. But after Arthur had endured his brother's grimness and old Brown's satirical familiarity for some time with the best grace that he could command, and had left the trio to themselves, then Wilfrid's hour came; and he used it.

'I did not like to say anything before Arthur, but what was the meaning of that extraordinary scene which your father and I witnessed just now?' he asked. 'Of what sorrow were you making my brother the confidant?'

'Yes,' said old Brown, heckling; 'what was that young man a-saying of to you, my dear? The Captain and I saw what made me as mad as a hatter, I can tell you; and he was not best pleased; so now you know.'

'La, pa! it was nothing; and you've no cause to look so glum, Captain Machell,' said Jemima, who was apt to be pert when

frightened to the point which lies between the first awkwardness and the final collapse. 'I was doing nothing wrong.'

'I do not suppose you were; still I should like to understand what it meant,' was Wilfrid's cold reply—his head held a tride higher than was necessary.

'Yes, my dear, we should like to know what it meant,' echoed Mr. Brown.

'And I've a good mind not to tell you,' said Jemima, frisking nervously.

'It would be a better mind to be frank,' said Wilfrid, lifting his eyes with one of his hard looks.

'Yes, my dear, make a clean breast of it, and then you'll be better,' said her father, with an odd kind of coaxing tone, as if he had been speaking to a child or a lunatic. It was his way of manifesting his sense of superiority to the silly sex.

'Well then,' said Jemima, who could never stand long on guard, 'I was just asking Mr. Arthur to take that little bit of money, pa, that you gave me a few days ago, so that he and Miss Muriel might marry and set up a house together as soon as they liked.'

'Why, Jemmy, my girl, what put that into your head?' said old Brown, trying to frown, but with a glistening glaze in his eyes which made the knit eyebrows a mere stage demonstration. He was not a man to throw away his money, nor did he like to see other people throw away theirs; still he had his romantic corners, and Jemima's generosity touched him.

'Well, pa, I hear that it is all off between them for want of a little something to start with, and I thought it would make every one happy if they could be set a-going without fuss or bother. And we have all we want, and more than I care for; and I like Miss Muriel, who has always been nice and affable to me; and Mr. Arthur is the Captain's own brother; and it seems hard that he should want when we have more than enough.'

She said all this in a breath. It was a long speech for her, and uttered in a manner wholly unusual to her; but she was out of her general bearings to-day and roused to points hitherto untouched.

'You are a brick, my girl,' said old Brown warmly; 'but,' wagging his head, 'a cool ten thousand is not picked up at every street corner, let me tell you, and you must keep a little tighter hold than that over what you've got; eh, Captain?'

'You are very good,' said Captain Machell stiffly; 'but it was quite unnecessary from first to last. Had you consulted me I

that your good intentions would be of no avail—
brother did not accept your offer?’

Jemima, shaking her head; ‘and that made me
so sorry to think of them being separated for want
of it, I could not help myself. So now you know all

again one of the sentimental fictions of life to pre-
angry men can be softened by the magnanimity of the
whereby they have been offended. They are only likely
the folly or the annoyance of it, and to let its moral great-
which cannot work and has been inconvenient, go to the
s. And Wilfrid at this moment was no exception to the

‘You would have done better to have left things alone,’ he
said in a tone of irritation; and at the accent which they had all
learnt by now, old Brown shuffled hastily out of the room. As he
told his wife, there was a breeze on between the young people,
and they had better have it out by their two selves.

‘I did not think I was doing anything wrong,’ said Jemima
beginning to collapse.

‘You did something underhand, which of itself is not right,’
he answered sternly. ‘It is not very becoming to plot with my
brother unknown to me, even though it is for his own good—as
you believe.’

‘But he doesn’t care for me,’ said Jemima hurriedly. She
thought her Captain might be jealous; it was natural; and she
had better satisfy him out of hand. ‘He is as much in love with
Miss Muriel as ever he can be, so what harm could it do even if
you didn’t know?’

‘Pshaw!’ said Wilfrid, turning away impatiently. Could he
possibly support this kind of thing for life? If she was buying
her position in the county with a price, so assuredly was he buy-
ing his wealth!

Jemima began to cry. She had been a fretful child, and had
grown up into a tearful woman.

‘Don’t cry,’ he said coming back to her, and forcing himself to
speak gently. ‘I am not angry, and you are a good little woman.
But for the future consult me when you are going to do anything
out of the common way, and take my advice; which is sure to be
better than your own; don’t you see?’

He took her meagre arm in his broad hand and drew her
gently to him, bending his head as if to kiss her forehead; but
something seemed to repel him, and he raised it again, leaving the
caress ungiven.

'Will you then do something for Mr. Arthur if I cannot?' said Jemima, after a short pause.

'No,' said Wilfrid uncomfortably. 'He has determined on his own way and will let no one help him.'

'Dear! such a pity! And they would make such a fine couple!' said Jemima, ignorant of pitfalls. 'They're just made for each other—to the very life.'

Wilfrid's heavy face was leaden coloured; but he made no answer. He had to bear his pain for life without solace or relief—a pain which no one could share and none must know.

'So would Mr. Derwent and Hilda,' continued Jemima.

'Derwent Smith and Hilda!' cried Wilfrid with an energy that made the girl start. It was a legitimate cause for an outburst and he profited by it. 'Why not George Lucraft at once?'

'Lal!' cried Jemima, her secret sympathies preventing her from seeing the sarcasm; 'I don't think Hilda cares for him, and she does for Mr. Derwent.'

'Listen—I have said once before that this is a subject which I will not have discussed,' said Wilfrid, morally crushing the poor weak creature before him. 'Never again let me hear you speak, either of love or marriage, in connection with my sister. You do not wish to make me angry, I am sure, and this does make me angry—more than I care to be with you.'

'I am sure I am very sorry, and I don't want to put you out,' said Jemima humbly, beginning to cry afresh.

Just then old Brown bustled back, 'hoping not to intrude' as he stood at the door with a made-up smile broadening his face; and little Mrs. Brown stole in meekly after, whispering to her daughter to come along upstairs and try on her bridal dress, which had just arrived from Paris.

'Ma, I never can grow to him, never!' cried the bride elect, sitting down on the couch in her bedroom and whimpering helplessly. 'He's that stern and high I don't know where I am with him. It's of no use. I try all I can to get free with him, but I can't, whatever I do. He seems to hold me at arm's length as it were; and yet why should he? Oh, ma, if only he had not taken a fancy to me, but had left me quiet at home with you!'

'It's too late now, my dear,' said good Mrs. Brown, also sitting down on the couch and whimpering helplessly in concert. 'Your pa has made up his mind and things have gone too far to be mended; and us women are made to suffer, Jemima, my dear! That's what we are born into the world for, it seems to me. But God is good and He knows best,' she added meekly, though it was a hard saying and faith a difficult virtue on the whole. For, as





SATISFACTORY FINERY.

she had often asked herself, why should poor women be tormented for the sake of those bothering men?—why should Providence have made the one so strong and the other so weak, that the one might be tyrants and the others slaves, with no help for them on earth, whatever there might be in heaven?

But tears are not the fitting pearls for bridal dresses; and after a time the two women kissed each other and wiped their eyes. Summoning their grand maid, who despised them and checked their familiarities as unbecoming to her own dignity, the gown was tried on and pronounced perfect; and grief was forgotten in the pleasure of satisfactory finery—as is the way with women.

While Jemmy was standing before the pier-glass pulling this fold and pinching up that seam, and Mrs. Brown was mentally calculating the cost price of the material, and burning at the iniquity of the profit included in the whole sum, a telegram was brought to the elder lady, which threw both into an agony of apprehension.

‘What ever can have gone wrong?’ said Jemmy piteously, feeling faint and queer.

It was nothing very bad; at least not for them; only one of the bridesmaids—that same Helen Lawrence whom my lady so much desired for Arthur—had fallen suddenly ill with what they feared would turn out to be scarlet fever, and therefore could not fulfil her engagement with Miss de Paumelle.

‘La ma! now isn’t that unfortunate?’ cried Jemmy, who had her favourite superstitions like her pet sympathies. ‘I’ve heard it’s as bad as bad for luck to have a bridesmaid fall ill.’

‘You mustn’t think of that, my dear,’ said her mother soothingly; ‘but it’s a pity to spoil the half-dozen. Five’s an awkward number to sit at table, but I dare say we can manage.’

‘Ma!’ cried Jemmy suddenly; ‘I’ll ask Miss Muriel. The Captain wouldn’t let me when I wanted to before, but he can’t object now when we are put into a hole as one may say. At all events I’ll try it on.’

‘My dear!’ remonstrated her mother timidly; ‘hadn’t you better begin as you’ll have to go on? It’s of no use your setting up against the Captain, Jemmy my dear. He’s master and means to be so if I have eyes in my head. Your pa’s been master over me, and you’ll have to dance to the same tune, so you might as well begin from the beginning.’

‘Well then, ma, suppose you ask her,’ said Jemima coaxingly. ‘The Captain can’t row you, you know, and you and pa have a right to choose my bridesmaids. Do, ma!—let me have Miss Muriel, and give her to Mr. Arthur. He was to have had Miss

Lawrence, you know, so a fair exchange is no robbery. Do, ma, dear! It will make me so happy if you will!’

‘La, Jemmy, who could refuse you, my dear, when you choose to ask!’ said Mrs. Brown, kissing her tenderly. ‘Why, of course, my dear, if you want her so bad as that you shall have her, let the Captain be as mad as he chooses. I’ll go over this very afternoon to Owlett, and I’m sure Miss Muriel is not of the stuff to say no when she is prettily spoken to, and you, my dear, want her to say yes!’

‘Oh ma!’ said Jemmy lovingly; ‘you are that good!—I never did see one like you—never.’

CHAPTER XXVI.

HIS FUTURE EXCELLENCY.

THERE was no sort of mystery about it, but Derwent and Muriel had often wondered why Uncle Louis never came to see them. He was the head of the family; their father’s uncle; their mother’s trustee under her marriage settlement; their own guardian through the long period of their father’s absence; the business man par excellence, to whom everything of importance was referred—who bought Owlett and sent the money for the furnishing; who chose Derwent’s tutors, and prescribed the course of his studies; who paid in to mamma’s account at the local bankers the four hundred pounds quarterly which made up her yearly income of sixteen hundred; who often sent presents to them all, and always at Christmas, and in the autumn when he came back from his tour on the Continent with pretty trifles from Paris and Vienna, Rome and Berlin, to show the young people that he had not forgotten them, and to give them a little pleasure in their uneventful lives. But though he wrote to them paternal letters, full of minute inquiries as to what Derwent was doing, and how Muriel employed her time, and where both stood in relation to their studies—though he was evidently deeply interested in them, and as evidently Mrs. Smith’s best friend—yet he never came to see them, and he never asked them to go to see him.

To the children he was a being as unknown and almost as mythical as their father. He was Uncle Louis; a kind of incorporate Fortunatus’s purse and the giver of good things to all: but, though a power in the household, like one of the unseen forces of nature—an agency not a presence, felt not visible.

Mrs. Smith did not talk much of him, though she did not appear to shrink from him when her children questioned her. He was a kind-hearted man in a certain sense, she once said when

they were especially enthusiastic over some jewellery which he had sent as the fruits of a visit to Castellani's—a generous man too; truly, she willingly allowed that—but a strict disciplinarian, one who never overlooked a failing and never forgave a fault: ‘He is right there!’ said young Derwent grandly. Still he had his good points, she went on to say in a lofty kind of manner, which looked more like a magnanimous rendering of the best side of him than the free acknowledgment of what was undeniable—as if she could have put another interpretation on his character had she been so minded, but would not, because of generosity and human kindness; and his virtues, if of a harsh and severe caste, were strong and manly and such as entitled him to honour.

All the same she evidently did not love this uncle, how much soever she was obliged to respect him. She did not wish to invite him to Owlett, she said carelessly when her children pleaded; and she was glad that he did not invite them to London. He lived, she told them, in grand style in his magnificent house on the banks of the Thames, and was a man of immense wealth and honourable standing. He was not married; and in early days—a trifle emphasised—he had been very good to papa.

As she was habitually reserved to her children, there was nothing wonderful in her not detailing any little anecdotes of personal gossip or description which would have filled in the picture more completely, and made them understand Uncle Louis better than they did. She simply gave the outline; answered such questions as they might ask, and volunteered nothing. But she taught them to respect him; his own kindness made them love him as much as an unknown person can be loved; and the portrait, which she carefully drew of a kind, severe, upright, and inflexible man, was one which touched a chord of sympathy in Derwent's heart, and inclined him to a reverence for this unknown uncle of his father only second to the reverence which he felt for that father himself. Of late indeed he would have said that, so far as he knew him, the uncle seemed infinitely the nobler character of the two.

Rich, honourable, and with a powerful connection, it was evidently not difficult for him to find a fitting place for Derwent; and the promise which he had always made, that the lad should have a fair start in life, was the sheet-anchor to which all the young fellow's hopes of happiness were moored. That appointment to the Vienna Embassy!—this was the Open Sesame which he longed for the opportunity to pronounce. He wished to travel and see foreign countries; but he wished to see them *en grand seigneur*, not as a Bohemian artist taking the rough with the

smooth, fraternising with peasants for the sake of their costumes, and sleeping on straw in his search for picturesque adventures. He had no fancy for the rough things of life, and he hated peasants as much as he hated sleeping on straw. His thoughts went to great cities full of nobles and diplomatists, where the politics of the world were regulated in after-dinner talk and the quiet corners of state apartments; such a place as Vienna, always Vienna, and the *crème de la crème* there.

His great-uncle had fostered the fancy, and Derwent's dreamy ambition had soared very high indeed. His Excellency! nothing less! He was to be ambassador some day, and to be ennobled and beribboned like the best. And when he was H. E. the Ambassador at some high court in Europe, being quite a young man then, without a furrow or a grey hair—youthful dreams go at fever pace—Hilda would be my lady and the vice-queen of ideal perfection.

Since the father's return Uncle Louis had not written. The quarter's account had been paid into the bank with the usual punctuality, but no word of greeting had come with it, and no word of welcome to the long-exiled traveller. Derwent had remarked this to himself; but he had not spoken of it even to Muriel. It had been another item in the sum of his displeasure and suspicion; which however he was learning to cast up in silence, keeping his thoughts and his sorrows to himself.

At last, when the uncertainty of his position became more and more intolerable, he wrote to Uncle Louis and reminded him of his promise. He was close on twenty-one now, he said, and he began to find his home life not only irksome but unmanly. Now that his father had returned to take care of his mother and Muriel, there was no reason why he should stay; and he was becoming impatient to begin the serious work of life on his own account.

His letter expressed as much by what it did not say as by what it did. Not a word of love, of sympathy, of admiration for the father whose praise had so often filled the boy's letters in the days when he was still—in Africa; not a word of regret at leaving him, or home; nothing, in short, but dissatisfied impatience and restless craving for change.

Uncle Louis, a shrewd man of the world who could read between the lines, understood the whole thing clearly enough. He pitied the poor boy profoundly, and gave him credit for the fine instincts which in truth he possessed.

'Poor lad!' he sighed compassionately as he folded, docketed, and laid away the letter. 'But he has bad blood in him, and the

father's strain must come out sooner or later,' was his second thought, less generous in its impulse than the first.

He did not answer this letter immediately. He had his own designs for the boy, and he wanted to wait until he should be legally of age. He would then have something to tell him, and something to propose, which he would rather not broach during his minority.

His silence was a terrible trial to Derwent. His hope that through Uncle Louis things would work clear for him with Hilda, made him doubly impatient of delay, and his sorrow at the turn which Muriel's affairs had taken helped on his disquiet. He could not be angry with Lady Machell, Hilda's mother; but he felt sure that if Uncle Louis would only interfere, everything would be made right, and all the knots pulled smooth and straight. Not hearing, he wrote again, a short time before the wedding; and this time—his demands rising higher by delay, like the Sibyl's of old, he introduced into his letter the love-sorrows of Muriel and Arthur, and besought Uncle Louis to give them a helping hand as well as himself.

'We are at a total loss for useful friends,' he said in conclusion. 'My father has evidently made no connection of any kind during his absence; and his experience, whatever it may have been, is of no value to us, his children.'

'I should think not,' said Uncle Louis aloud, as he folded, docketed, tabulated, and put away this letter also; refreshing his memory of dates, which was waning, by looking into a register headed E. Smith; whereby he saw that Derwent would be of age in about three weeks' time—when the die would be cast, the truth told, and his fortune placed unreservedly in his own hands.

It was a maxim with the merchant to let each person know the truth of his own affairs, and Derwent has to learn the seamy side of those belonging to him. But, to tranquillise the lad, he wrote to say that he hoped to be able to place him according to his wishes; and that this day month he should expect him in London. He wished that they should become personally acquainted before he took the full responsibility of his future on himself, though he made no doubt but that this acquaintance would only heighten the goodwill which they had mutually felt for each other so far as they had gone. As for Muriel and Mr. Machell, if the latter would call on him when next in town, he had no doubt but that he could arrange something which would set all that little difficulty straight, and ensure the happiness which they seemed so much to desire. He had always designed to give Muriel a fitting dowry, if she married according to his liking; and if Mr. Machell

was according to his liking, the thing was done, and there should be no further obstacle on the score of money. He hoped that this letter would meet the wishes of all concerned, and he was Derwent's affectionate uncle and friend, LOUIS MEREDITH.

The tone of the letter throughout was that of a generous and powerful autocrat disposed to good deeds and glad to help his suffering subjects. It was by no means offensive, but it was autocratic, and above all things it expressed power.

Derwent was overjoyed. Had some good angel, brooding over the earth and regulating the affairs of men, specially interested himself in the behalf of these four young people in an obscure village in England, and rearranged the whole mosaic of human life that each of the two Strephons should be married at their parish church to their respective Chloes, he could not have felt more elated with present prospects, more sure of future success.

He and Muriel read the letter in the garden—their favourite council-chamber—and congratulated each other over it; and said what a splendid fellow Uncle Louis was and how excellent a thing it was to be able to depend on anyone—and they could depend on him; how surely everything would come right now that he had taken matters in hand; and what a blessing it was to have a business man among them! They laughed like happy children, and wove the brightest visions that youthful hope and fancy could devise. Derwent rose from his late depression with a bound to the highest point of elation, feeling that fate was conquered and fortune won; and Muriel caught the infection too, and echoed his hopes with her own.

When he said in triumph: 'Lady Machell can make no objection to your marriage now, Muriel; you at least are safe!' she answered, as confident in spirit if more softly in tone: 'No; she cannot object now, I should think: nor to you, darling. If Uncle Louis makes your fortune as he seems to say he will, there cannot possibly be any objection to you:—to our boy, no!' lovingly.

'To neither of us,' he answered. 'All throughout Lady Machell has put it only on want of money; and of course as a mother she was justified. Now, you will see, she will welcome us both.'

Muriel's smiles a little vanished. She remembered certain sharp words from my lady which were not due only to want of money; but she did not repeat them. She would not sadden her brother at this moment with unpleasant reminiscences. Let the day have its joy, as its evil is sufficient for it; why sadden the feast with the skeleton?

'I am so glad,' she said vaguely; and her words, pointless as

they were, satisfied her brother, and seemed exactly what she should have said and what he expected her to say.

After they had talked a little more, going through the whole circle of the future and minutely examining every beautiful possibility and glorious certainty as their hopes constructed each, Derwent took the letter to his mother, where she sat with his father in the workshop that had been fitted up for him since his return. How he had learned it in the heart of Africa no one knew, and he did not tell, but he had come back with a passion for fine carpentering which he executed with the skill of a professional.

It was a rare event for Derwent to go to this room; and both father and mother looked up in surprise when he entered, his face brighter than they had seen it of late, his step lighter, his bearing pleasanter. But those parents, once so passionately beloved, the one of whom he now distrusted and from the other was estranged, knew rightly enough that he had not gone there to see them for love nor to consult with them for respect, but rather to give them his ultimatum on some point which it was his will that they should know. Things had come to this pass with them, and there was no chance of making them better.

'I have had a letter from Uncle Louis, mother,' he said rather coldly as he entered. 'At last he has found me a post.'

'Yes?' she said, turning pale; 'and where and what is it?'

'An appointment as attaché, I suppose. It was what I asked for and what he has always promised; but he does not distinctly specify it there.'

'I know that you have always wished for that,' she returned, looking at her husband as if asking him to say something.

'A good opening,' put in Edmund Smith constrainedly.

'Yes,' said Derwent as constrainedly.

'And when are you going?' asked his father, not looking at him.

'Uncle Louis says this day month, sir.'

His mother turned away.

'And then we shall lose our boy from home for ever,' she said with an affectation of lightness in her voice with which the quivering lips and humid eyes were not very harmonious.

'It is time,' said Derwent, who heard only the voice and did not see the face.

'Not the less a pain when it comes,' she answered, a more natural accent of trouble breaking through her artificial assumption.

The boy's eyes softened, but he answered steadily enough:

'You have my father now, mother. You no longer need me, though perhaps Muriel still does.'

'One love does not drive out another, my boy,' said Edmund.

'One presence makes another unnecessary, sir,' he answered stiffly.

'I have observed that you think so; but you are none the less in the wrong,' the father said with rising irritation.

Their conversations generally began by his trying to conciliate his son and ended by their greater estrangement.

Derwent held his head very straight. If his vanity and affection had a little abated in these latter days, his pride had not; and his suspicion that all was not right with his father—that in point of fact things were decidedly wrong with him—made his home temper anything but pleasant.

'This day month?' cried his mother hastily for a diversion. 'We shall still have you for your twenty-first birthday. I am glad of that; though we shall make no public display. Still, we can keep it happily among ourselves.'

'I see no need for keeping it at all, mother. The great good which it will bring me is legal independence.'

'From the harsh parental control that you have suffered under so long!' said Edmund with weak sarcasm.

'From something perhaps as painful, sir,' flashed out Derwent.

'What date is the De Paumelle marriage, my dear?' asked his mother in the innocent way of a deaf person who has not heard the sharp beginnings of strife.

'The fifth,' said Derwent, after a short pause.

'Do you go?'

'Certainly; why not?' proudly. 'Muriel and I are both going.'

'Muriel? I shall be sorry if she goes,' said his mother slowly.

'And I shall be more than sorry if she does not,' he answered.

'Do your mother's wishes count for nothing with you, Derwent?' asked his father.

'My mother's knowledge of Muriel's affairs is not so great as mine,' the boy retorted.

Mrs. Smith's delicate face was suddenly convulsed as if by some sharp and intense anguish; but the habits of a life came to her aid, and it was the old calm mask which she turned on her son, as she said:

'Your words mean a reproof, my dear. It is undeserved. I know what is best for my child.'

'In this matter, no, mother; it is I who know what is best. Muriel ought to go to the wedding; and,' impulsively, 'she shall.'

‘Our commands notwithstanding?’ said Edmund.

‘Notwithstanding,’ echoed Derwent. ‘If you had gone among our friends they would have had weight, sir; but, as you know nothing of the people here, you cannot judge of certain things as well as we can.’

‘Your father understands his own life best,’ said Mrs. Smith hastily.

‘As I am not admitted into his confidence, and know nothing of his reasons, I can only judge of things as they look,’ he answered. ‘And you can scarcely wonder at it, mother, if I do not like what I see.’

Edmund rose from his bench in strange and passionate disorder.

‘We must come to some explanation together,’ he cried angrily. ‘Your manner to me is intolerable, Derwent. I will not endure it longer.’

‘My love! he is but a boy!’ said his wife, laying her hand on his arm and smiling as if with uncomfortable compassion.

‘No, mother; I am a man with a man’s perception of evil and honour for truth,’ he cried.

‘Perception of evil and honour for truth!’ said his father, trying to speak with scorn, but turning pale and shuffling his feet uneasily.

‘Yes, and this is not truth,’ said Derwent, looking at him fixedly and gravely. ‘There is something concealed—perhaps something that cannot be told. You know best what it is, father; I only know what I feel and see.’

Edmund shrank back. All his irritation, like his pleasant self-assurance, seemed to fall from him in the presence of his son. He could be himself, and more than himself, with his wife and daughter; pose for the saintly kind of English gentleman which the one maintained and the other believed him to be; accept their homage and return their love; pay back their tender flattery with caresses, and make them both the objects of his attention and the happy sharers of his hours; but something in his son overpowered him:—and in all their contests Derwent was the victor, and he abashed, humiliated, conquered.

‘You are rude and undutiful,’ said his mother sternly.

‘I am neither, mother. I want only to be told the truth. Take me into your confidence, treat me as your son—as a man—and no one would love or reverence their parents more than I,’ he answered.

‘You are too childish to argue with,’ she said with well-feigned disdain; and turned away

Derwent's heart, which had leaped at the prospect of a struggle whence might ensue an explanation, sank down at her voice and manner. He gave an irrepressible sob.

'No, mother,' he said, pushing off the hair from his forehead; 'that is as untrue as all the rest. Neither you nor my father dare to tell me the truth of things; that is it; not that I am too childish to be spoken with.'

'Have it your own way,' she said icily. 'If it gives you pleasure to cherish these wild fancies, keep them, my dear. Meanwhile, we have forgotten the main purport of your visit to us here—your uncle's letter.'

'There is nothing more to be said about it,' he answered after a short struggle with himself. 'I am leaving home this day month, and probably shall not return for some time. If I go abroad, I certainly shall not.'

There was a pause; no one of the three dare trust emotion to speech; at last Derwent said, in a voice which he managed to keep tolerably steady:

'And when Lady Machell herself asks Muriel to be at the wedding, you will offer no opposition, mother?'

'Lady Machell will not ask her,' she answered.

'But if she does?'

'Even then I should desire her to refuse. There can be no close friendship between ourselves and the Machells.'

'If no disgrace is attached to us I do not see why not,' said Derwent slowly.

'It is my will—our will,' replied his mother, looking at the clock. It was close on the hour when they expected Bob Rushton to come for the final arrangement of certain terms which he had made.

'And mine that we should be allied as closely as is possible for two families to be,' he returned passionately. 'If it has to come to a fight between us, mother, it must.'

'Derwent!' she cried in an agonised voice.

He turned to her eagerly.

'Mother! mother! are you going to be yourself again!' he cried, flinging his arms round her and holding her to him.

'My boy!' she said, kissing him with feverish passion; then she pushed him from her; 'you are mad,' she added coldly, and went nearer to her husband.

The boy stood for a minute as if dazed, then slowly turned from the room, feeling that the last effort had been made, and that henceforth he had lost both father and mother for ever.

'My position is unbearable!' cried Edmund, as his son closed the door behind him. 'Not all your love, Constance, not all

Muriel's sweetness, can make it endurable. I cannot bear it—and will not!’

‘You must, my darling,’ she answered soothingly. ‘It has to be worked through. We have no choice.’

‘It is good that he leaves us so soon, before bad becomes worse,’ said Derwent’s father fretfully.

‘Yes, very good,’ she answered quietly.

She stood for a moment quite still, then drawing her husband’s head to her breast kissed it tenderly; but as she smoothed his hair and caressed and loved him with the old fond touch, she suddenly broke down into a paroxysm of passionate weeping. For the instant the mother conquered, and she realised to the full the fearful price which her devotion to her husband had cost her.

CHAPTER XXVII.

REHABILITATED.

LADY MACHELI was in no sense a bad-hearted woman. She was only clear as to what she wanted, and not afraid of methods. She was ambitious for her children, because she had felt the humiliation of an inherited position deprived of its appliances, and she wished them to marry money because she had suffered from the sorrows of poverty. If love could be added to money, so much the better; but love with an empty purse was a fool’s paradise which it was the duty of every parent to bolt and bar against their young, while money was at the least a fact standing four-square and undeniable.

In that inner self which she suppressed as a matter of stern duty, she had mourned over Arthur’s pain and had been sorry to hurt Muriel; but the cause was more important than the result, and if she could but save her son from destruction it would be a gain for all time well bought by a little present suffering. If she could! Still she had no pleasure in seeing suffering or causing it, and it had been this sense of duty only which had compelled her action. Had the marriage been simply negative—if not actively good, yet by no means ruinously bad—she would have accepted it and would have hidden her disappointment that it had not been better; but, as it was, she would have been false to all her traditions and unfaithful to her principles had she not opposed it with her whole strength, end as the struggle might.

As for Hilda and Derwent, she looked on their affair as a childish absurdity about which it was not worth while to waste either time or thought. Perhaps she was right. How dear soever it might be to Derwent at this moment, and how precious soever as a remembrance for his future manhood, still it was only

what she said, a filmy romance like most first loves, baseless in its beginnings and impracticable in its issues.

Guy Perceval was far more to the purpose. Certainly he was not beautiful to look at, but he had solid qualities which would wear well; and his very crazes proved his good impulses. If Hilda could not love him romantically she would at the least respect him; and respect lasts when romance has died.

All the same if Derwent Smith had had Guy Perceval's material advantages, my lady would have preferred him for her son-in-law as richer than Guy by so much grace and beauty; but as things were she chose rather than a handsome youth of unknown family and uncertain fortune, a man whose family and whose antecedents, whose character and whose fortune were all impeccable and as much public property as the parish church; and in choosing him, with the distinct if unexpressed intention of one day making Hilda choose him also, she believed that she had done the best thing possible for her daughter's enduring happiness.

But again, let it be said, her action was founded only on the basis of money. Given Derwent with Guy's place and money, she would have chosen him for Hilda with greater pleasure than the present master of the Manor; or given Muriel with only fifty thousand pounds, and she would have accepted her for Arthur with greater pleasure than she had fixed on Jemima with millions for Wilfrid. It was only this dreadful want of money that made all the mischief! Wherefore, she was not to be accused of inconsistency, when, after Derwent had shown her Uncle Louis' letter, she allowed herself to be thawed by his fire, and to believe in the pot of gold which he said was shining beneath the rainbow.

'My fortune is made!' he cried enthusiastically; 'there is nothing now between me and full success.'

'I am glad of your brilliant prospects, my dear,' said Lady Machell with stately kindness. 'I have always said that you would do well if fairly started.'

'And I will justify your belief,' he answered with a not unbecoming pride.

How handsome he looked!—how full of youthful hope and fire! Different from Arthur, who was more massively fashioned in all ways and with more of that large kind of energy which can create its own circumstances, Derwent had yet that seductive kind of power which belongs to a highly wrought nervous organisation, and a fine quality of fibre.

'He will do well,' thought Lady Machell approvingly; and she was glad for the boy's sake that he had got this brilliant opening, if it did not touch her secret designs for Hilda. Still, he was sure

to do well. It was the very career for him; and he was almost certain to fulfil his dreams and rise to eminence in the diplomatic service.

Then said Derwent, leaning forward in an attitude as expressive of beseeching as if he had knelt at her feet:

‘Keep Hilda unmarried, Lady Machell, till I can come back to claim and place her in a position worthy of her! Keep her with you—for me!’

My lady laughed, but not unpleasantly.

‘Keep her for you, such a mere boy as you are!’ she said, passing her hand lightly over his picturesque head. ‘There can be no question of an engagement between you and Hilda, two such babies as you are! You have your spurs to win yet, my boy, and she has her education to finish.’

‘But give me time to win them,’ he pleaded. ‘Promise to keep her till she is of age—five years from now—unless she forgets me, and herself wishes to marry some one else.’

It was an imprudent admission. My lady did not take it up, but she remarked and cherished it all the same.

‘I will not force her to marry against her will, if that is what you mean,’ she answered always pleasantly—almost lightly indeed;—and playfulness from Lady Machell was the mark of supreme good fortune to the object.

‘And if she is willing to wait for me? dear Lady Machell!’

‘I will not coerce her one way or the other,’ she answered. ‘I can scarcely believe that you have made any way with her,’ looking at the boy fixedly; ‘as I do not suppose you capable of the dishonour of such a thing. For you know it would be dishonour, Derwent, if you had tried to entangle the affections of a girl so young as Hilda, when you have positively nothing whatever to offer, and are only just now about to put your foot on the first step of the ladder. Still, if your prospects have become certainties, and my daughter should chance to be unmarried some years hence, why not you as well as another? I would not be your enemy; but I cannot promise you more. There is nothing against you but your youth and want of definite fortune and position; everything for the present moment, but barriers that time and your own good conduct will remove.’

‘I cannot in honour ask more,’ he said, his handsome face beaming like a young god’s. ‘Only let me feel that I have a chance which it will depend on myself to make a certainty!’

‘Surely; you are not discarded from the list because you are Derwent Smith,’ she answered smiling. ‘I wish only my child’s happiness; and I have always been fond of you, my dear.’

‘Thank you,’ he said with deep emotion. ‘You have made me thoroughly happy now!’

He was so sure of his success in the future that to get so much concession was equivalent to a bond. He wanted nothing more, though he would have been contented with nothing less.

‘And now, dear Lady Machell, what about Muriel?’ he asked: this softer mood of their former pitiless Juno must not pass without fruits for his sister as well as for himself.

‘I have always said that I have no personal objection to Muriel—only to her want of fortune,’ was the reply made with sudden stiffness.

‘But if Uncle Louis does as he says he will? He is not married—has no one so near to him as my father and us—and has always been our best friend,’ said Derwent. ‘He can, if he likes, give Muriel fortune enough for any man!’

‘I would not oppose her entrance into our family if she came sufficiently provided,’ replied Lady Machell not too graciously.

She still resented Muriel’s tenacity, and only conceded so much out of love for Arthur.

‘Then, Lady Machell, write to her and ask her to go to the wedding!’ said Derwent. ‘I am going of course, but Muriel says that she will not. She says that she has promised not to meet Arthur, and she will not break her word. But if you ask her, dear Lady Machell, she is freed from her engagement, and everything will come right. Do, Lady Machell! it will make us all so happy!’

‘I am not in the habit of repudiating my own words,’ was her reply, spoken coldly and haughtily.

‘But you say that it was only because of her want of fortune—and now that this is removed,’ he argued, ‘you have no other cause against her, for indeed she has not a fault!’—and see how honourably she has acted! Dear Lady Machell, you will ask her to go of your own free will and to please you;—will you not? She will not else.’

‘Not else, what?’ said Sir Gilbert, looking in at the open window where the two were sitting.

‘Oh! Sir Gilbert, you are well come!’ cried the boy, getting up from the low chair near my lady, and going closer to the window, where, in a few rapid words, he poured out part of his budget and enlisted the father’s sympathies for his son—where indeed they had always been.

The boy kept back his own dream of hope with Hilda. It was only Muriel’s matter of which he spoke; the other was a secret between him and Hilda’s mother, and he preferred to keep it so.

'Yes, yes,' said the good-natured baronet; 'surely, my dear! We should all be very dull without pretty Muriel Smith. Yes, you will write to her, Annie, and tell her to come?'

Was it weakness or wifely obedience? womanliness or crafty calculation? Was it the desire to please her son and to re-establish the old loving relations which had been so terribly interrupted of late, or natural sympathy for a young girl until now a favourite in the house, the only one in the neighbourhood to be discarded from the great event of the neighbourhood? Was it that kind of general benevolence which is the result of success, or was it a concession due to the probable arrangements to be made by Uncle Louis? Who can disentangle the crossing lines of thought which make up the impulse of action? Something of one and something of another probably influenced my lady, so that, softening by fine degrees under Derwent's earnestness and her husband's insistence, she yielded to the prayers of the one and the desires of the other, and wrote a kind little note to Muriel which she supposed would set all straight at Owlett, how much soever it sought to undo her own work. For a woman like Lady Machell is always Ahasuerus to her own mind. Those whom she touches with her sceptre graciously are bound to receive gratefully; pride being a passion sacred only to herself. And if she so far humbled herself as to write as she did now to Muriel, begging her to come to the wedding on the fifth, for her sake—underlined—and to make everyone at Machells happy—also underlined—she anticipated a refusal no more than a king would anticipate the refusal of pardon and reprieve sent instead of the executioner to a condemned criminal.

So Derwent rode back to Owlett triumphant on all counts; meeting Arthur by the way, coming from Paumelle House, and carrying him with him as the sign of his victory and the fruits of his success.

Was there ever such a joyous moment as that when the two young men rode through the gate at Owlett? It was the loveliest little poem that could be written in human hope and youthful joy—the sunniest break in a dull sky that an unexpected burst of summer beauty could create. Muriel, who had been watching for Derwent's return, understood at once the meaning of her lover's coming. She remembered nothing of the harsh words that had been said, of the dignity that she ought to maintain, the pride that she should cherish. There was no pride, no dignity, for her at this moment—only love and delight.

She came to meet them, almost running—her hands outstretched, her blush-rose face, which had not laughed before to-day

for so many sad days, now dimpled with happy smiles—every smile a caress, a vow, a confession; her true and faithful heart shining in her eyes, neither afraid nor ashamed to show how great had been her loss by her frank delight at this dear return. Why should there be shame where there is love?—and does it not, when perfect, cast out fear?

Arthur, no less frankly elate than herself, flung his bridle to the groom who came to the front on the sound of the horses' hoofs up the drive; and drew her away to the dear old seat beneath the tulip-tree, feeling like an exile who had once more found his home. There they sat and talked, and, as Derwent and she had done before, wove their pleasant dreams and made themselves glad with hope and joy.

Arthur would not forbid Uncle Louis if he wished to endow Muriel. That was not in his list of prohibited advantages. All the same he would work for himself—if not in the bush, yet he would do something by which to use his strength and justify his manhood; but what came to Muriel was her own, and she might hold and enjoy it. The great good of this prospective endowment was to ensure my lady's consent; and hers given of course Mr. and Mrs. Smith would give theirs also. Their refusal had been founded only on a quite natural and laudable pride; and the sensitive dread of appearing to force their daughter on a family unwilling to receive her was something to be praised, not condemned. Indeed everybody somehow came out into perfect goodness and beauty, and a paradise bloomed where so late a desert had frowned.

'I am especially glad that you are going to the wedding,' said Arthur, taking Muriel's forgiving consent as certain; 'putting myself out of the question—and I need not to say how glad I am for myself.'

'Why glad for anything but yourself and your mother's reconciliation?' asked Muriel.

'On account of the De Paumelles themselves: or rather on account of my future sister-in-law,' he said; 'for that good little woman has just done a kind and generous thing to me, and I know she will be pleased.'

'What has she done?' asked Muriel, opening her eyes.

'Offered me ten thousand pounds to start with,' he answered smiling; 'so we have had Danaë showers in abundance to-day!'

'How good and kind!' cried Muriel. 'She is very sterling; I always thought so. But——,' she hesitated.

'No!' he said laughing; 'I have not come to that, my darling. Your uncle's gift to you is one thing—my accepting ten thousand pounds from Jemima de Paumelle is another.'

Muriel brightened.

'I did not suppose that you would,' she said. 'It would be better to work and wait than to marry on her money.'

'I wonder if there is a subject on which we could think differently!' cried Arthur with a lover's enthusiasm. 'We were made for each other from the very beginning.'

She laughed.

'I think so,' she said half shyly, half playfully.

All this time neither Mr. nor Mrs. Smith appeared. If they knew of Arthur's presence there in the garden, they thought it best to ignore it and to let the new current run itself dry unhelped or unhindered by them. It would run dry; of that they were sorrowfully convinced; for by what spell soever Derwent might have been able to work on Lady Machell (he had purposely not spoken to them of Uncle Louis' intentions with regard to Muriel) it was one but for the moment and would have to pass like any other. Only when Muriel, wishing to have all made clear before Arthur left and to see her way straight before her, went into the work-room where they still sat, and told them of Lady Machell's olive-branch sent by Derwent, and of Arthur's desire—which was almost more authoritative than desire—that she should go to the wedding like all the rest of the world, only then they both said—the mother as the original voice, the father as the echo—that they wished her to decline, and that if she went it would be against their express will and command.

While they were fencing with, and not replying to, her earnest prayers to tell her why, the servant came to the door and announced Mrs. and Miss de Paumelle 'on very particular business.' There was no help for it. If they did not wish to knit up relations with which they might hereafter be reproached as the worst injury that they could have committed against unoffending people, yet neither did they wish to excite suspicion by a reluctance to meet their neighbours beyond the natural reluctance of reserved and secluded folk, as they were known to be. Hence they were obliged to go into the drawing-room with their daughter, to meet there Mrs. and Miss de Paumelle, Arthur Machell and Derwent, and to see the destruction of their defence work, the razing of their barriers.

For what could they do? What could they say? When Mrs. de Paumelle set forth their sad case of ceremonial destitution, through the illness of Miss Lawrence—and Miss de Paumelle, with a look at Arthur, besought Muriel's maidship as if it had been the very crown of her marriage, the lustre of the diamond without which all the rest was shabby and unsatisfactory;—when Arthur, in the true Machell voice and manner, assumed the thing as

done, and spoke of his mother's pain should her request be refused, and how his father would take it as an intentional slight, and Wilfrid as a personal affront; which last was a bow of rather longer dimensions than he was warranted to draw;—when Derwent did his best to cut the ground from under their feet by asserting their willing consent, and even Muriel would not help them by expressing a hypothetical willingness to abide by their negative decision if given;—what could they do? They were met and surrounded on all sides; and unless they wished to lay the train to their own mine they must give way:—as in time they did, with evident but not excessive reluctance—reluctance of the kind to which they could refer afterwards and say: ‘Did we not object till overpowered by your insistence?—did we not show that we did not wish it?’

But when was youth other than heedless of signs?—love other than obstinate in its own desires? Even to Muriel the light on her lover's face blinded her to the cloud on her mother's; and she was too happy in her reconciliation with Lady Machell to remember the hard words by which the breach between them had been made. The day was gained and the point carried; her acceptance by Arthur's people was in its turn accepted by her own—however grudgingly, still accepted; and nothing was wanting to the perfect happiness of the present moment save their sympathy and absolute approval.

But these were just the jewels missing from the band. How could they sympathise, how approve, when that very day they had promised to take Bob Rushton into their service as their bribe for his silence?—when their social honour and personal pride, their repute and position were, henceforth and for ever, in the hands of a returned convict, who for weakness if not for wickedness would be sure sometime to let the whole thing slip from his grasp to be made public property and private scorn? They saw it stealing on ever nearer and nearer; and they knew that one day it must overtake and overwhelm them. The fewer the links then that would have to be broken when that dread day should dawn, the less pain to be endured; but, wanting a solid ground for argument or even for authority, they were forced to consent to the thing that they would not, and to see their children follow lights believed to be stars from heaven, but which they in their sorrowful knowledge knew were marsh-lights leading to flower-bid ruin—death-lights playing over well-masked graves.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA

OCTOBER 1877.

The World Well Lost.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

'I SWEAR IT.'

INDOLENCE was Bob Rushton's central spiritual point, his moral cell round which all his other faculties clustered and on which they were founded; just as Derwent's was the pride of self-respect; and his father's the vanity which demands praise. This indolence had been the origin of all Bob's misfortunes, as he euphemistically called his offences; and it was to be the cause of those to come. His ideal of life was that of a Neapolitan lazzarone, sleeping in the sun and waking only to eat, drink, and play; and the worst punishment in the hell in which he believed, but which he made no effort to escape, was that of hard work, such as he had had at Bindwood.

He had been grateful enough to Miss Forbes, when first she rescued him from starvation. Though she made him work yet she let him live; and at the time this was a circumstance by no means to be counted on as belonging to the certainties of to-morrow. But men forget the past as readily as they shut their eyes to the future, and Bob, well fed but tightly held—as he phrased it, with his nose to the grun'stone, and the grun'stone handle never to let it rust for want of turning—began to think the price paid for his living excessive as well as irksome; and to wish in an aimless kind of way that he could find his plate filled with beef, and his mug with beer, without the trouble of earning either by work.

When chance revealed to him the true personality of Mr. Smith of Owlett, the problem was solved. He felt that his good angel—if he had one; which was doubtful—had at last awakened to a sense of his duty; and that henceforth all his larks would fall

ready roasted from the sky and all his fields grow clover. He went back to Tower consoled for the hard knocks that had been dealt to him by fate at the hands of Miss Forbes. They were knocks done with—like Bindwood—sure now not to be repeated; and he was too well pleased to remember the bruises.

He was more light-hearted than he had been for years; indeed, more than he had ever been in his life before—only troubled about the exact point to hit with his former 'pal,' so that he should not demand less than he might get, or more than would be given. He did not mean to hurt his old comrade, by whom he had sat for so many years in that well-guarded carpenter's shop, where they had worked and talked in dumb show, undiscovered by the officer in charge, but none the less understood together. He meant to make it easy for him, if pleasant for himself; and to keep their joint counsel strictly. If he was known and pointed at the Governor should be safe, he said to himself; and if he would do as he ought, it should never be the worse for him.

At the first, Bob meant to ask only for something like what he had now—a place as privileged handy-man, where he would have high wages for no work, and be answerable to no man save the master, who would take care not to make that questioning too strict. But as he walked along the dark road, his mind travelled and his ground-plan enlarged; as minds and ground-plans do when men are on the eve of making conditions with a victim, squeezable, helpless, and prolific; and he foresaw the time when he should demand an annuity sufficiently generous to enable him to live in a cottage of his own, with nothing to do but keep himself warm in winter by the fire, and in summer-time lounge against the gate-posts in the sun. Fifty pounds a-year; that was his figure. He could live on fifty pounds a-year—at least he thought so. As he added up his various requirements for the second time, however, he found that they had grown as fast as yeast-plants, and that a pound a week would not do all he wanted. An extra ten shillings a week might hold him clear; but after a little more adding up, and another sprouting of the yeast-plant, he finally established himself on the Pisgah of a hundred; when he would be content and ask no more. A hundred a-year: not too great a sum where-with a gentleman with an ugly secret was to buy silence and security for life.

'The Governor daren't refuse me,' said Bob to himself, as he opened the Owlett gate cautiously, and met his old benchmate in the drive, leaning on the faithful arm that had never failed him, and come what might that never would!

This demand of his for the place of handy-man in name, and

privileged loafer in deed, was just that which the Smiths were most reluctant to bestow. If only he would take a sum of money and leave the country instead of fastening himself on them as a leech for life! They offered him what they could give for the present, and they promised the rest in due time; but Bob had a shrewd idea of the value of a bird in the hand, and thought it well to keep in view the game which had to be stalked. The Governor might take it into his head, you know, to go out for a little walk one of these fine nights and forget to come back again; and then where would he be, with his cottage of cards blown to the winds, and nothing of it left but a pinched finger got in the building? No, all things considered, he would stick to that place of handy-man; and make the best of it when he had got it. And he would take it now at once; and if he could not make things square with the old lady at Tower, well, they must go crooked: so that was all how and about it.

It was to no good that Edmund asked him to wait until Derwent should have left home—to none that Mrs. Smith urged the consideration due to Miss Forbes as his benefactress, and advised a more decorous appearance of deliberation, some show of reason why, and less of ingratitude and haste. Bob, weary of his work and longing for the luxury of idleness and unlimited pots of beer, listened to them with a fair show of attention enough, but ended by pressing yet a little closer the ends of that cleft stick in which Edmund found himself; and when a man is in a cleft stick, what can he do but submit to be pinched? There was nothing for it but to give way—and to give way with the best grace they could command; telling him that he was to come when he had spoken to Miss Forbes, and that they hoped he would be comfortable when he had come.

‘But,’ said Mrs. Smith, as her last feeble effort, ‘you must not be surprised if the other servants do not like it—things being unfortunately known as they are—and if perhaps they refuse to associate with you. You know the prejudices of people,’ added the poor lady, with that pitiful paltering with the eternal laws not rare in those who speak of evil to an evil-doer whom they are careful not to offend.

‘All right, mum,’ said Bob with unruffled serenity. ‘Them as don’t like it will have to lump it, and them as can’t will have to go. I’ll do nobody no harm if they’ll leave me alone; but I’ll not give up a good thing for other folks’ whimsies.’

It could not have happened at a more inconvenient moment; but then misfortunes always do happen at inconvenient moments—indeed, when is the course clear and the place prepared for

them? Just when Derwent's brightened prospects had raised his spirits and sweetened his temper, when Muriel too was snatching, as it were, a brief hour of happiness, this wretched incubus hovered down in the night and fastened on them; and there was no way in which it could be shaken off. Bob was the incarnate curse that always follows on crime—the chastisement that is extra to legal retribution. It might have been different had any spark of nobleness warmed his poor mean soul; but when was weakness other than selfish, or selfishness other than cruel? Bob Rushton was not a ruffian, as ruffians go—he was only an indolent, slippery, untrustworthy varlet, who could not rise to the dignity of self-control—but he did as much harm as the worst ruffian a-foot, and with as little compunction. For whether his ease was bought by the sorrow of others or not, influenced him no more than the fluttering of the bird influences the snake when about to strike. He was tired of Tower with its 'Bob, do this,' and 'Bob, go there;' its hoeing and weeding, wood-chopping and boot-cleaning; its water for drink, play-hours forbidden—and never a farthing in his pocket to play with, had they been allowed! Working out his salvation was not much in his line; and as he knew that he would be far jollier at the Governor's than he was now, why, he determined to be jolly, and to leave the consequences which did not touch him to the care of those whom they did. If the piper had to be paid, so long as he was not asked to pay him he did not take to heart the wry faces of those who had.

It was not like Mrs. Smith to be a coward. She was reticent truly; but reticence is not faint-heartedness; and to hold one's own in silence, asking neither help nor sympathy, is sometimes more courageous than to spread out one's life like linen in the sun, that all may run their fingers through the rents and comment on the amount of washing to be done. This time however she was a coward, self-confessed. She dared not tell her son, so proud and pure, and prond of his purity, that they had taken into their service this returned convict whose presence in Grantley Bourne he had already so hotly resented, and about whom there had been such bitter discussions. It seemed such a pity to break down his new happiness for what was to all appearance just a wilful act of insane philanthropy, if it were not something worse. Still, if she did not like to confess, she could neither deny nor recall. She had simply to sit by and watch the springing of the mine, and do her best with the ruin that it would cause when the moment came.

It came sure enough; when Derwent one morning went into the *stable-yard* to look at his horse, and was met by the groom with a

curious air of offence and discontent, and spoken to by him in a tone as curiously dry and uncomfortable. Derwent, being of the kind to whom servants are a very doubtful kind of brothers indeed, did not trouble himself about a manner which only betokened and did not express. He simply noted disdainfully the fellow's evident ill-humour; but so long as he kept to the shibboleth prescribed for inferiors, he might harbour what feeling he would—human nature in subordinates being like the Primrose guinea—a possession allowed as an abstract right, but by no means to be used.

As the young master came out from the stable he met Bob Rushton face to face. The man's presence there at all, in dust and ashes and crushed contrition, would have been sufficient cause for Derwent's anger, but as he was—his hands in his pockets, a purple pansy (Hilda's flower!) between his lips, his cap set jauntily on one side, lazy, loafing, smiling, content—it was as if some deadly insult had been flung full into the boy's face.

He stopped suddenly, and looked at Bob with an indignation as undisguised as his contempt. The man met his fiery eyes a little insolently. Knowing what he did he was not to be put down by the high hand of Edmund Smith's son; but he touched his cap conventionally and said: 'Good morning, sir;' as anyone else might have done.

'What are you doing here?' asked Derwent angrily.

'I've come to be helper, sir,' answered Bob with a subtle accent of familiarity in his voice, also with something like the shadow of a smile passing over his face.

'Yes, sir,' said the groom sullenly; 'and we're going, Jim and me; and so is Taylor'—Taylor was the coachman.

'How dare you presume to come here, among honest men?' cried Derwent hotly.

'The lady and gentleman has taken me on as handy-man about the place,' said Bob tranquilly.

'And I discharge you!' cried Derwent, forgetting common sense and his minority.

'Beg pardon, sir,' said Bob pleasantly; 'the master has taken me on; and I'll take my warning only from him.'

'Then you'll have it before the day is out,' cried Derwent.

'I don't think I shall,' said Bob Rushton slowly, and looked the young master full in the face.

'Dare you bandy words with me, you scoundrel!' said Derwent, advancing a step nearer.

'You be advised by me, sir,' returned Bob in an odd half paternal way; 'you just leave things alone as you don't understand, and let them as knows manage them.'

For all answer he lay sprawling on the stones. Derwent's pride flamed out into passion and got the better of his prudence and his breeding.

The man picked himself up with the hang-dog look of one to whom a kicking comes naturally. He neither squared nor swore, only rubbed his bruised shoulders ostentatiously, looking at Derwent the while with an expression in his face which the dullest could not fail to see meant something more than mere reproach. And yet what else could it mean? What could this returned convict have on his mind which the young master would not care to hear?

'I'll remember you for that, sir,' he muttered after a pause, but keeping well out of Derwent's reach.

'And he's got what he deserved,' said the groom approvingly, while the rest of the men grinned and honoured the lad for his high ways. They and their kind like to feel dominated by a superior. It is a pale reflection of divinity which, when armed with thunderbolts compels respect, when holding up a cornucopia attracts adoration.

'And you'll get it again if you presume to speak to me,' said Derwent, looking supreme and archangelic. 'We are not accustomed to men like you about the place.'

'All right,' said Bob, shuffling off: 'but maybe the time 'll come when you'll get accustomed,' he added as he vanished round the corner into the safer precincts of the kitchen-garden.

'You did it well, sir,' said Taylor, who had seen the whole affair from the window of the harness-room, and now came forward to add his account to the rest. 'It is hard on us all that we've got to give our hands to a man like that, or else to leave a place where we've stopped so long and been so comfortable; but there is none of us in the house or out of it as will live fellow-servants with a gaol-bird. It is not to be expected, sir, as men who think anything of themselves and their own characters would.'

'You are quite right, Taylor,' said Derwent loftily: 'but I do not think you will have to go.'

'Then he must,' said Taylor firmly.

'He will,' said Derwent in his grandest manner. 'My father and mother have allowed themselves to be imposed on by this worthless fellow, but I am sure that when they know how it is taken by you all they will send him off.'

'I hope so, sir, for their own sakes as well as ours,' said Taylor.

But he did not look too confident. He was a shrewd guesser; and if he had not found yet he was burning.

Then the lad, flushed and highly strung with his encounter,

strode away into the house, and to the work-room where Edmund Smith sat tranquilly making a glove-box for his wife. It was a small repetition of poor 'Louis Capet's' locksmith's work. The revolution might be thundering at the gates, but he found nothing so interesting to chronicle as the work that he had done with file and anvil; and Edmund Smith, with Bob Rushton installed at Owlett, lost all perception of danger and of pain in making nicely-fitted dovetails from a handy length of cedar.

'What is the meaning of this disgraceful affair, mother?' asked the boy, standing midway in the room and speaking with mingled sternness and imperiousness.

Edmund shifted his feet; the mother raised her head but not her eyes. These were still fixed on her work—a bit of wood-carving, which she had begun in order to be still more the companion of her husband.

'What do you mean, my dear?' she asked in her quiet way; but her voice was perceptibly unsteady.

'The presence of this disgraceful fellow here in this house,' he cried. 'Is it true, what he says, that you have taken this returned convict, this common thief, as a servant here at Owlett?'

'Yes, it is true,' said Mrs. Smith still in the same attitude, facing her son but not looking at him, while her husband turned pale and winced, and busied himself at random among his tools.

'Mother! with Muriel—with me still here?' he remonstrated.

'With you and me—and your father—here,' she answered, laying her hand on her husband's arm.

'Have you no respect for your children left in these miserable latter days?' said her son, ignoring the companionship. 'It is not right to degrade us by such association.'

'The Bible teaches us God's forgiveness and man's mercy,' she answered; and at this she raised her beautiful eyes and looked at her son steadily.

'This is not true Christianity,' returned Derwent. 'Indifference to right and wrong is not religion.'

'But pity to the erring is; and ability to see the essential good through any cloud of fact is the only true philosophy of life,' said his mother emphatically.

'We have argued this question before,' he returned coldly; 'and as we could not agree then we are not likely to do so now. But I think you owe it both to Muriel and myself as your children, to yourself as a lady, and—' he hesitated; 'to my father too,' he added with visible effort—'that our home should be kept pure and free from disgraceful associations. In harbouring such a wretch as this

Rushton you insult and degrade every honest man and woman under your roof.'

He spoke slowly and sternly. The presence of this returned convict had stirred him deeply.

'For God's sake!' cried Edmund wildly, rising and holding out his hand.

'Hush!' said Mrs. Smith peremptorily to her son; 'you are going beyond yourself, Derwent. Your duty is to accept what we—your father and I—think it best to do, and to fall into the family life, as we arrange it, with obedience and respect.'

'I will not accept the presence of a convicted thief,' he said loftily.

'While you remain among us you will,' was her reply, with an attempt at sternness that quivered down into a kind of entreaty—with something underneath not expressed.

Her son looked at her for a moment. Evidently thoughts both bitter and unwholesome were working in him.

'If there is any reason for this, and why I ought—and must—I think you should tell me,' he said with measured emphasis. 'If it is only a charitable whim of yours, mother, that this wretch should be here, I will turn him out and take the consequences. It is profanation that he should breathe the same air as Muriel; or myself,' lifting his handsome head with the old familiar action of pride. 'And if any harm comes of it I will appeal to Uncle Louis.'

'Leave things alone which you do not understand, and let those manage them who do,' said his mother evasively—the very words which Rushton had said only a few minutes ago.

'If it is by my father's desire—for his own purposes—if my father is bound to have him, I will do as you say, mother—accept what I cannot avoid—the family shame and my own ruin,' returned the boy slowly.

Edmund looked up and down and here and there; he fingered his tools and he smoothed his beard; shifting his feet and his place with uncontrollable uneasiness; but neither he nor his wife spoke. If only he could nerve himself to confess all, to say out that hidden hideous truth, manfully now at once, and then trust to his son's love and pity, and the intrinsic love-worthiness that was in himself to get over it! If he could but face it, and live through the bitter hour! Sooner or later it must be discovered; and why not now as well as at another time? But must it be discovered? Might he not sail over the shallows as so many others had done, and die with his secret unconfessed and unknown? All crime is not public property. Murders are done and the murderer is never

found; so why might not he escape detection as well as they? why must his past be so specially transparent?

The coward's hope in providential interposition upheld him, just as the coward's fear of pain repressed him. Not now! not now! The ordeal was too terrible to be undertaken voluntarily; and a straw might save the drowning man.

Husband and wife exchanged one rapid glance. Had he shown signs of yielding she would have stood by him in the fatal moment with all her strength, all her energy; she would have helped him with the reverent love that had shielded him so loyally since his return, and that might have influenced her son, as all strong feeling and resolute will do influence the young. But he shrank back and turned his face once more towards that false peace which he and she had tried so hard to maintain as true. Hating pain as he did, either to feel or to cause—loving, irresolute, soft-hearted, vain—he could not bear to see either the distress or the abhorrence of his boy. If it had to come—as it must—let it come in his absence; and when he, the father and the cause of all, was not there to see it. No, he could not bear it: not now! not now!

He made a sign with his lips and hand which she alone understood—but which told her that the moment had passed and the opportunity was lost.

‘It may be by my wish and desire without including disgrace or ruin,’ he said weakly.

His wife took her cue without wavering.

‘My dear child, your imagination runs strange riot!’ she said to her son. ‘Shame! ruin! Because your father and I have agreed to do a kind thing by a poor creature who has been in trouble, but who is now desirous of leading a new life, is there necessarily an ugly skeleton of our own to hide?’

She laughed with a light and pleasant air; but the metallic ring in her voice was not light nor were the lines round her mouth pleasant.

‘There is a skeleton,’ said Derwent, looking from one to the other; ‘mother! it is useless to deny it!’

‘Foolish boy!’ she said, with a repetition of her former laugh, as she adjusted her saw with exaggerated care. ‘There is a medium between density which sees nothing and your exaggerated sensitiveness, my dear, which creates its own horrors. It makes you hard and suspicious, which are not amiable qualities; and really—they lose one so much time in life!’

The boy turned from her abruptly. This new manner of hers, light, mocking, unreal, hurt him more than all the rest, and more than all the rest made him feel that the world in which he had

lived since his father's return was delusive, deceptive, phantasmal. He went up to his father—the old boyish love, checked for the moment for the one, rushing over him for the other like a pent-up stream let loose.

'Father, tell me!' he said. 'Whatever the truth may be, tell it to me! Why is this man here?—and by your wish and sanction? What does it all mean?—where is it to end?' He laid his hand on his father's shoulder and gripped it hard. 'Why is he here?' he repeated. 'What claim has he on you?'

Edmund turned his haggard eyes to his wife. Her face, which had become of late even more haggard than his own, thin and worn and suddenly old, gave him back the ready smile, the encouragement of love, which he had always found there.

'Dear boy, what do you wish your father to say?' she asked, smiling.

'Yes, what do you wish me to say?' he echoed.

'What can either of us tell you that will satisfy you?' she continued. 'Of course Rushton is here by your father's wish. We cannot let the poor creature starve.'

'He was not starving at Tower,' said Derwent.

'But the work was too hard for him. It was killing him,' said Mrs. Smith, dropping her eyes.

The lad raised his shoulders disdainfully. Bob Rushton, sleek and oily, had not the look of a man dying from overwork. The excuse was too palpably a blind to be accepted as a reason.

'Did you know this man in Africa, father? Was he—your agent—there?'

The father caught at the word eagerly.

'No, not in Africa, certainly not!' he cried. 'What a relief it was to be able to speak out straightly and firmly without lies or subterfuge! 'No—not in Africa.' He could say that quite confidently—swear it in a court of justice if need be; and look his son, like the world, firmly in the face while he did so. Decidedly not in Africa!

'If not there, then where?' asked the boy. His manner, no longer haughty and reserved, was tender, earnest, pleading as if for very life.

'I knew him in England, my boy,' his father answered, meeting that new birth with a passionate eagerness of welcome. 'It is many years ago now, and I used to see a great deal of him at one time; and believe me, dear child, he is a good fellow at heart, though he did once get into trouble. But he is not all bad—no one is; not even,' his voice a little broke, and he lowered his eyes, 'not even, Derwent, convicted criminals.'

He took his son's hands in both his own as he said these last words, and pressed them feverishly.

'You know his whole history?' asked the lad, too intent on Bob Rushton to notice that sudden failing in his father's voice.

'Yes; all of it.'

'And he yours?'

The father let his hands drop.

'What there is to know of it,' he said, with a forced laugh and an uneasy shuffle.

'What do you think there is to know?' asked Mrs. Smith, with her thin metallic mirth.

'Is there anything? Father!' the boy's voice rang with a passionate entreaty, of itself the most pathetic thing in this whole chapter of pain; 'father!' he repeated, 'is there anything in it to our harm—our disgrace?'

'You make your own spectres,' said his father coldly.

The boy took back the weak and trembling hands that had just let his fall.

'Say no, boldly! Look me in the face and say that there is nothing to hide—nothing that you are afraid should come to light—nothing that this man knows and that we are not to know,' he cried.

A pause: a moment when each held his breath: when life seemed to stand still, waiting for the answer.

'There is nothing,' then said Edmund, in a harsh and husky voice, looking at his wife who flushed to her temples and shuddered visibly.

'Look at me, father!' cried Derwent. 'Nothing?—there is nothing?'

The restless, shift, furtive eyes by a supreme effort raised themselves and looked full into the clear young face bending down and gazing so earnestly into his.

'Nothing,' he repeated with the boldness of despair. 'I swear it—so help me God!'

The boy gave a sudden sob. For a moment he could not speak, choking back the tears that rose into his eyes and strangled his voice. Then, with indescribable grace and tenderness he laid his lips on his father's forehead.

'Forgive me, father,' he said in a low voice, 'all my folly and wickedness since you came. I have been in a fog—and have suffered more than I have made you or anyone else suffer. You have lifted a load from my heart. I cannot thank you enough—but forgive me.'

'I forgive you heartily, my boy,' said Edmund, accepting his

rôle with that wonderful facility of a vain and loving man. 'Let us say no more about it. We have not understood each other, that is all.'

'And now we do,' said Derwent affectionately.

'Yes, now we do,' said Edmund.

The lad turned to his mother.

'Mother, do you forgive me?' he said, as he flung himself on his knees by her, and put his arms round her waist, as he used to do when a child, looking into her face with his dark eyes yearning for her love, and his young mouth pleading for her kiss.

'My boy!' she answered, laying her head against his with a heavy sigh, and drooping suddenly. When he lifted her face, she had fainted.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN THE LISTS.

LADY MACHELL had eaten her leek handsomely. She had to perfection that power of going back on herself when circumstances were too strong for her which belongs to the two extremes of reasonableness and weakness; and now, as at some other times in her life, she had shown herself reasonable almost to excess.

She had done all that could be expected of her by the most exacting; and she had done it well. She had made a gracious apology fluently; had kissed Muriel, foreign fashion, on both her cheeks, and asked her to forgive and forget those hard words of hers, spoken without due consideration and repented of as soon as spoken, in the lime-tree walk at Tower:—a request which the girl was too loving and sweet-tempered not to grant without reserve, and always with the feeling that it was Arthur's mother whom she was called on to forgive, and that it was something of Arthur himself to whom she opened afresh her generous and unselfish heart:—and no one could have seen by her present manner to her 'pretty Muriel,' as she sometimes called her, that she had ever been anything but the affectionate and quasi-maternal friend of so many years' standing now as to constitute a claim as well as a tie.

She was as benevolent to Derwent as she was gracious to Muriel. Perhaps, had she been as candid as she was astute, she would have given some of the credit of her renewed graciousness to a second letter from Uncle Louis, in answer to a third of Derwent's entering into a yet fuller explanation of how things stood with him and at home—his undying love for Hilda, and his belief, amounting to certainty, that he could make his way with her people if he had but the fortune and position necessary; and how Muriel's future had brightened, owing to the generous promises

made by this dear unknown uncle and friend ; and how happy they all were—and how much happier he might be if only Uncle Louis would strip his own nest bare that his might be well lined. For this was what it came to substantially, when freed from the disguise of self-deception and fine words.

And as Uncle Louis's answer to this appeal was a very definite promise to provide for both nephew and niece to such extent as would leave nothing to be desired, my lady had set her sails to that wind with a good will and heartily, and the Smiths of Owlett were now in the ascendant at Machells, and received as if there had never been an hour when they had been discarded.

The estrangement too between my lady and son was also a thing of the past ; as much as that other estrangement between Derwent and his parents, which had caused so much distress while it lasted, but which was now so happily at an end. Thus the marriage which was to be the turning-point in the lives of everyone concerned, was ushered in with a kind of universal hymn to peace. At least so far as my lady was concerned ; though there were still outsiders, left in the cold ; and Machells, like every other house in the place, was greatly exercised in its mind at the philanthropic freak whereby Bob Rushton, the returned convict, had been transferred from Tower, where he ought never to have been, to Owlett, where he had even less business to be.

Also, to do the men of Machells justice, the fighting blood in their veins, never long in want of an object to set it flowing, at this present moment found that object handy in Guy Perceval of the Manor.

In their dislike of him as their little sister's possible proprietor, they made a great deal more account of Derwent than else they would—Uncle Louis's letter notwithstanding ; or rather it ought to be said that Wilfrid did :—Derwent Smith being to the mind of old Brown's future son-in-law so utterly impossible for Hilda when things came to close quarters, as to be a safe kind of stalking-horse behind which to compass Guy's confusion. If this gave the boy false hopes, and so prepared for him disappointment and bitterness in the days to come—well, better men than he had had to go through the same thing ; and pain, which is the law of life, must be expected by everyone, thought Wilfrid, true to his central point of hardness to adult humanity, while tender only to children and dumb animals, adding a little contemptuous compassion for the weaker kind of women who loved too well and came to sorrow as their reward. Besides, it is experience ; and experience is the making of a man. The lad was too useful at this moment for it to be a matter of much account whether he was

justly treated or no. Wilfrid's main thought was to protect his little sister from Guy, not to take care of Derwent Smith; and that a man should look out for himself was a maxim too much after his own heart to be questioned under present conditions.

On his side Arthur was disposed to let things settle themselves. A clear stage and no favour he thought as good a rule for Derwent as for anyone else; and if his uncle would make the boy's fortune, why not he as well as another in the fulness of time, when Hilda was fit to be married to anyone?

The upshot of it all was however that Derwent was almost too well treated at Machells; and if he had been as wise as he was well-content would have seen what the whole thing meant; while secret war was made by both brothers against Guy—but war after the manner of gentlemen and with plenty of rose-water on the wounds.

As for Muriel, she only came back to her past condition, and took her former place vacated for a time. She had always been a favourite at Machells, both with Sir Gilbert and my lady, and until now with Wilfrid: Arthur did not count, on the principle of 'going without saying.' But even after the reconciliation between her and the authorities had been formally confessed and acknowledged, the change in Wilfrid's bearing towards her was both marked and embarrassing. What did it mean, and why should he treat her so coldly? as more than herself mutely queried by astonished looks and uplifted eyebrows.

When he heard that she had been chosen as bridesmaid in the place of Helen Lawrence, he expressed his mind in the terse but conclusive manner which Jemima had learnt by heart by now; though why he should have made such a to-do about it, and looked that high and haughty, beat her to understand, as she said to her mother dolefully. But he did; and though he did not fume for long—which was not his way; his method of showing annoyance being more concentrated, sharp, and military than that—yet he did blaze when he heard of it for a moment fiercely enough; so fiercely that, by the law which makes extremes meet, the poor little girl from sheer fright plucked up the seeming of a spirit, and said pertly, while quaking like an aspen leaf:—

'Well, I'm sure I don't know how to please you, Captain Machell'—she had never once called him Wilfrid, nor had he asked her. 'Here is Miss Muriel, as nice a young lady as ever lived, and quite taken to again by Lady Machell; and whether she is or she isn't, I've always heard say that a bride has the right to choose her own maids. Which I'm sure is little enough for her to do,' whimpering; 'seeing what she's going to.'

When he met Muriel at Machells, recognised as of old, he made

her feel that he had no part in the peace proclaimed, and that for him she was still exiled and unforgiven. He would have been hard put to it to say what her especial crime was, if he had been questioned; for the fact that Arthur loved her and she him was surely no crime now—according to the Machell code of sins and offences—given Uncle Louis and a portion sufficient for the maintenance of the Machell honour! It had only been Arthur's inheritance of bankruptcy and his want of fortune which had been the obstacle to and made the sinfulness of their love—had not my lady said so?—the obstacle removed the sinfulness went with it. Why then should Wilfrid carry on as he did, according to Jemima's phraseology, and make it so uncomfortable for everybody?

'What an odd fish he is to be sure, ma!' she said to her mother one day after her return from Machells where she had been alone, and where she had found the young Smiths. 'He was downright rude to that sweet pretty Miss Muriel, and she engaged to Mr. Arthur; and all for what I should like to know!'

'Ah, my dear!' said patient Mrs. Brown with a little sigh; 'there's a deal about gentlemen as ladies never do know. But tell me about Miss Muriel,' she continued, settling a little closer to the table. A good gossip was like her favourite cup of tea, and refreshed her when nothing else could.

'Well, he treated her to-day downright cruelly, ma. He really ought to be ashamed of himself, that he ought! and she so good-natured and seeming not to mind it! If she had given him a good setting down it would have been only what he deserved, great big monkey; that he is!'

'He has a high hand and a heavy one, this future husband of yours, my dear,' said her mother anxiously; 'and I doubt, Jemmy love, if you'll have a soft time with him when you are fairly married and in his power, as one may say.'

'Perhaps things will be better then, and we'll grow to one another,' said Jemmy, with another sigh to echo her mother's.

'Perhaps you will, my dear,' she answered; 'and at the best gentlemen are all pretty much alike and carry things over our heads as if there was nothing between them and the Lord but their own wills. So one's about as good as another, and one manages to creep along somehow.'

'It's a shame all the same,' said Jemima with such indignation as she could muster.

'Yes, well, so it is,' returned her mother; 'but so it is, my dear, and so it must be. Your father's hand has been none of the lightest, and so I tell you; but you see we've had you, my dear, and on the whole I might have done worse. So tell me now

about Miss Muriel and the Captain. We shan't have many more talks together, Jemmy.'

'La, ma, yes! many and many a one!' said Jemmy tremulously; 'but I'll tell you what happened when we go to bed to-night, for pa's coming in—I hear him—and I would not for worlds speak out before him.'

'Well, no,' said Mrs. Brown de Paumelle drily; 'I shouldn't advise you, my dear.'

The circumstance which had called down the feeble lightning of Jemima's wrath on her absent and hard-handed Captain had been a curious display of temper founded on a most insignificant matter that had taken place that day at afternoon tea at Machells. They were all there—Muriel of course by Arthur, and Jemima under my lady's liberal wing. For whatever went wrong Lady Machell was uniformly the same to Miss Brown de Paumelle, and showed a fixed determination—so far to her honour—to abide faithfully by her part of the contract, and to make the sacrifice as easy to the poor little victim as the most perfect appearance of maternal tenderness could.

The tea-table had been brought out and placed under the trees, and the young men handed the cups which Hilda filled. Both brothers came at the same instant to Muriel, who, looking up with her pretty smile to Wilfrid, naturally took Arthur's. Wilfrid pretended afterwards that it was an accident; but at the time it looked very like design; for he set his lips and lowered his brows as the rejected cup fell from his hand into a dozen pieces on the ground. In the midst of the chorus of interjections which greeted this disaster, turning to Muriel he said with a smile of intensest bitterness on his heavy face:—

'If you were in the south of Europe, Miss Smith, they would say you had the evil eye.'

'I hope not,' she answered, looking up at him and smiling, as she had done before. 'I should not like to bring disaster on my friends.'

'Perhaps you do without liking it. On me for instance when—you made me break this cup.'

He said this in the off-hand manner of men when they fence with the truth of their own thoughts.

'It is rather hard, is it not, to blame me for your——?' began Muriel; and then she stopped. She was going to say awkwardness, but the word sounded harsh and rude; and she checked herself in time.

'My misfortune?' asked Wilfrid, not seeing the alternative.

'If you choose to call it so,' she answered.



TEA AT MACHELLS.

'Your influence can be scarcely classed under any other head—an evil eye for others, however unintentional, and however beautifully framed,' returned Wilfrid, looking her full in the face; then, as if by an after-thought, glancing at his brother.

But it was not Arthur of whom he first thought.

Muriel turned pale. When was love other than superstitious?

'At least you are uncompromising, and show what you mean with unmistakable candour,' she said, a dash of girlish pride as well as pain in her voice.

'Pardon me, in spite of my candour I do not suppose that you know in the least what I do mean, Miss Smith,' he answered, harshly. 'And perhaps it is as well for you, and everyone else, that you do not.'

'You make one thing clear enough,' said Muriel; meaning his dislike.

'Do I?' he answered; 'I wonder if we should agree on what that one thing is,' with an unmistakable sneer on his lips, and a look in his eyes which Muriel could not interpret, but which went down into her heart with such a mingled sense of pain, fear, and bewilderment as almost took away her breath. Then he turned away and devoted himself to Jemima with exaggerated courtesy, just as Arthur came back from the tea-table, and within earshot again.

He certainly was, as Jemima said, 'carrying on' against the former favourite both oddly and unjustly.

Another person too, who 'carried on' in his own way, was, as might have been expected, Guy Perceval. He came to Machells as usual during this uncongenial time, but he came more from a sense of duty to his intentions in the future, than for present pleasure to himself or others. The brothers indeed made things too strangely disagreeable for a thought of pleasure to be mixed with them; and Lady Machell seemed to have withdrawn the buckler which hitherto she had been so careful to hold over him. They spoke of Hilda pointedly as a child, and treated her more than ever as if she had been a little girl of ten or twelve at most—and they had never yet sinned on the side of precocious respect. They mounted guard over her with more and more the air of making her the sacred oriflamme of the family; or they threw her into Derwent's hands in the very teeth of the master of the Manor, with his theories and his hopes, while they carried him off to something entirely unsuited to his tastes and temperament, but which he could not refuse and where he was both bored and boring. When he looked to Lady Machell for the customary protection, in all probability she would smile her approval of her sons' plans, and

descant on the pleasure to be derived from a game at billiards where he would be beaten without mercy, or the advantages of shooting at a mark where the only things he was likely to hit were the bystanders—unless he managed to shoot himself. And all this time Hilda sat by her mother with that sweet simplicity of obedience, that high-bred resignation of herself, which made her supreme charm in the eyes of a man who liked to be master and who resented opposition.

He was intensely disgusted at the whole thing; and sometimes thought that he would give it all up and let the Machells go to the destruction which they were courting. Honestly believing that it was destruction, and as honestly that he should be Hilda's salvation here and hereafter could he but induce them to adopt his views of training now, and let him complete the course himself hereafter, it was a struggle between his feeling of human pity backed by moral duty, and his sense of personal dignity weighted with his impatience of contradiction. And as yet it was uncertain which way it would turn.

This almost ostentatious reinstatement of the former discarded sinners—his enemies against whom he had unforgiven griefs and unavenged wrongs; the subtle and intangible hindrances created by the brothers, and their as subtle and intangible enmity; Lady Machell's undeclared change of policy; all annoyed him beyond bearing. But on the other hand moods pass while circumstances remain the same; and Hilda's beauty, youth, good birth, and possibilities under the hand of a skilful experimentaliser, were eternal facts—while Wilfrid's grim humour and Arthur's more declared hostility were movable and remediable.

Still it was an unspoken and uncomfortable bit of play—of which everyone saw as much as he chose to see, and where no one was hopelessly committed—an awkward little accompaniment of discords running through the hymn to peace which my lady had intoned with so much boldness and force.

The marriage was close at hand now; and Guy had been of course invited as one of the principal guests. If not the 'best man,' which was Arthur's place, he was to be the second best and to have Hilda as his partner. The chief bridesmaid was to have been Helen Lawrence, as we know, partly because of her position in the county, partly to secure a fitting companion for Arthur, with the contingent remainder of assigning Hilda to Guy.

The first hitch in the plan had come in the illness by which Miss Lawrence was thrown out and Muriel taken as her substitute; so that she must either be the principal maid and fall to Arthur's

share, as Jemima desired, or be given to Guy Perceval to the confusion of other arrangements. The other hitch had to come now when Guy made his appearance on the lawn at Machells, just after Wilfrid had smashed the rejected tea-cup, and set Muriel wondering at his unaccountable savageness and that strange look which seemed to express a world in itself, but a world of which she knew nothing, and whereof the language was foreign to her.

Without much preamble Guy announced, in his thin high-pitched voice, his intention, or rather his obligation, to leave to-morrow morning for the purpose of meeting a certain man of eminence in London—a meeting that was to be the opening of a great many new channels of activity for more than the inhabitants of Grantley Bourne. The luminary in question was a French specialist, whose acquaintance the master of the Manor and trainer of hobby-horses in general especially wished to make; and now was his time; for his club had arranged to give the chevalier a dinner, and Guy, whose name had been put on the list as one of the stewards, was bound to attend. He would be back the day after to-morrow—on the morning of the wedding—he said. He had looked at Bradshaw, and he found that he could do it by taking two lines, and waiting at one station for so many hours; where, if he was not exceptionally unlucky, he should just catch such and such a train at such and such another station, and so be landed at the Manor by ten o'clock, in time to dress and get to Paumelle House by eleven. But, in view of the bare possibility of a failure, he had come over to lay the facts of the case before Lady Machell, and to ask her indulgent consideration for his circumstances.

Indulgent or not he meant to go to the dinner; and my lady was wise enough to fall in with what she could not prevent, but with which she was in her secret heart greatly displeased.

Of course he was quite right to go, she said with her unruffled good breeding; while the brothers exchanged glances, and Arthur shot a look at Derwent. If the worst came and he did not return, they must fill up his place at the eleventh hour; but it should be kept open for him till the eleventh, and she hoped that he would be there at the time arranged.

‘I am sure to come back,’ said Guy.

‘If you do not, Smith can take your place,’ said Arthur blandly; and then he looked at Muriel and smiled.

Guy’s face clouded. The admittance of the young Smiths to Machells and the marriage, after their public banishment, had sufficiently disturbed him; and coupled with his own indefinite disgrace had more than disturbed; and to-day something in the

whole air and attitude of the group as he came up to them seemed to indicate even more than he knew.

Muriel, looking happy, lovely, and at home, he might have allowed. He had no sister for whom he wished to secure Arthur, and he himself had got over his sudden fancy for her on the principle of the one nail which drives out another; but to see Derwent there, with that air of absolute ease and universal possession, characteristic of the nature to which hope stood for certainty, was more than he could endure with equanimity; and Arthur's suggestion broke the back of a patience which had never been able to endure the piling up of many straws.

'I am not likely to forfeit my engagement; least of all to give up my place to Mr. Smith,' he said contemptuously.

'You could not have a better substitute. We don't catch a real live hero every day,' said Arthur.

'Oh, if you prefer your hero!' cried Guy, twisting round on one foot.

'My dear fellow, no one talked of preference,' put in Wilfrid, with the air of a heavy dragoon representing good sense and a moderate way of putting things; 'only, if you leave us in the lurch, we must in our own interest find a substitute.'

'I shall not leave you in the lurch,' snapped Guy.

'In which case we shall not find a substitute,' said Wilfrid.

'I scarcely expected from old friends the slight implied in the preference,' continued Guy, going back on the subject with womanish irritability.

'And I scarcely expected to have to deny again that we have made it,' repeated Wilfrid coldly.

'A mere lad—a nobody—the son of no one knows who!' muttered Guy.

'Come, come, Perceval, this is going too far!' said Arthur, who overheard him.

To touch Derwent's parentage was to touch more than the boy himself; something which rasped Arthur in his tenderest point, and not only warranted, but enforced, the taking up of cudgels in his behalf.

Lady Machell interposed.

'My dear friend,' she said soothingly, 'we shall fill up your place only at the very last moment, I assure you. If you do not put in an appearance we must, else the whole arrangements will fall to pieces. If you feel that you are bound to go up to Town to meet this foreign gentleman'—she shrugged her fine shoulders as her conclusion. She meant to convey her idea that it was a pity, and might perhaps have been prevented; but if it must be it

must. 'I am sorry that anything should be superior in attractiveness to the event of the neighbourhood, but——'

She lifted her eyebrows this time in place of the former shrug. The one was as expressive as the other.

'It is a case of duty, not of superior attraction,' said Guy.

She smiled.

'And duty is its own reward,' she answered; 'but for all that, the marriage procession must be properly arranged.'

'In any other way but this,' he answered sulkily under his breath.

'I must be the best judge of ways,' said Lady Machell stiffly.

Guy looked from her to Derwent, and from Derwent to Hilda—the two sitting close together, as if paired by nature and circumstance all the same as Arthur and Muriel—talking, looking, smiling, without stint or rebuke. What did it all mean? Was he absurdly jealous? boyishly suspicious? or had the wind of my lady's favour really turned and scattered his schemes like chaff on the threshing floor?

'In that case——' he began, answering his own thoughts.

'In what case?' asked Wilfrid, interrupting him.

'Yes, I do not understand you—in what case?' echoed my lady.

'I see my place,' cried Guy.

'Always the place of a friend,' said my lady graciously.

But Guy's heart and self-love were pricked to the quick, and he was not to be smoothed down by a few soft words, even though Lady Machell, the mother of Hilda, spoke them.

'I once thought so,' he said, looking at Derwent; 'but in the present company I am forced to think otherwise.'

'Do you mean to insinuate that if I am a friend you are not?' asked Derwent, rising to his feet and prepared for war.

Guy measured him from head to foot. The lad was the taller, the handsomer, the more gallant of the two; but the master of the Manor stood on his pedigree and his acres, and despised the possessor of only beauty and a fine temperament as much as if bulk constituted quality and gold was the supreme virtue of humanity.

'Yes, I do,' he then said, in his high thin voice. 'Lady Machell will have to choose between us; for I refuse to meet you, Mr. Smith. So now you all know!'

'As you have put yourself in the wrong you have left my mother no choice, Perceval,' said Arthur hastily; while Wilfrid turned to him angrily, and Lady Machell raised her eyes with all the Machell pride flashing in them.

'I allow no one to dictate to me my conduct, or my friends,' she said haughtily.

'Then you throw me over for that young man—a friendship of inherited generations for an acquaintance forced on the neighbourhood only yesterday, and without a holding in the knowledge or the respect of the people?' cried Guy.

'Lady Machell, do not speak—let me answer; for you will have to answer to me,' said Derwent, turning from my lady to Guy, and speaking steadily, though he was pale and agitated.

'Answer to you? I answer to you? Do you think me mad?' said Guy contemptuously.

'If you are a gentleman'—began Derwent.

Guy cut him short with a scornful laugh.

'If! there is not much if about that!' he said. 'And being a gentleman I am not inclined to "answer" a young man whose family history is both suspicious and obscure. Fools only do such things; wise men do not.'

'Wise men shall,' said Derwent, advancing towards him; but Wilfrid laid his strong hand on the boy's shoulder and held him back.

'No brawling here, Smith,' he said sternly. 'Men arrange these things by themselves, not before ladies.'

'There is nothing to arrange,' said Guy. 'I am not going to fight a duel, if that is what you mean, with the son of a man who for aught we know may be a returned convict like that precious scamp he has just adopted; as little as I will enter the lists with him in any kind of contest, or for any kind of prize,' significantly.

'I am sorry that my choice of friends should vex you,' said Lady Machell calmly; 'but I am afraid that you, Mr. Perceval, like everyone else, must submit to my will in my own house.'

'Not to association with Derwent Smith,' said Guy.

'Then not with us at all,' said Wilfrid fiercely—not to defend Derwent but to uphold the Machell right of supremacy.

'At your pleasure,' said Guy, fuming, turning away as if to leave.

But Lady Machell, who, above all things, objected to burning of boats, laid her hand on his arm as he was passing.

'Come, come, my friend,' she said graciously; 'this kind of thing must not go on. We have been friends too long to be separated for a moment's petulance; and we must go on being friends. Let us forget this little ebullition, and double down the page. We shall see you, then, the day after to-morrow as arranged? As I say, we will wait for you to the last moment.'

Guy, substantially good-hearted if superficially disagreeable and tainted with the petty spite and impulsive vindictiveness inseparable from that kind of feminine element which was so largely

represented in his character, could not resist this appeal. Perhaps it would be truer to say he did not wish to resist it; he too having principles concerning the burning of boats which coincided with those of my lady.

'I am sorry if I have let my temper get the better of my judgment,' he said after a moment's pause. 'Let this momentary misunderstanding pass. Yes, you will see me at the wedding.'

'All right,' said Wilfrid.

'So glad,' said my lady; but Arthur looked at his little sister sympathetically; and Derwent, repudiating Christian doctrines, thought strife a decidedly better thing than peace, and regretted my lady's flag of truce from his heart. He was obliged however to follow where the rest led and accept what they proposed; more especially as his share in the reconciliation brought about by my lady's own will was at the most infinitesimal, seeing that Guy, taking leave of the group awkwardly, forgot to include either him or Muriel, but went off uncommitted to even such bonds of good fellowship as might be knitted up in the touch of a hand or the nod of a head.

'Better that it should be so,' thought Derwent in his youthful intolerance of fair-seeming; 'we are not friends and never can be, and it hampers me less with everything.'

'I forgive them,' was Guy's reflection, 'for the sake of that dear girl of theirs; but I don't forgive that young fop; and if I can put a spoke in his wheel and spoil his market I will.'

With which amiable intention he went away, and made no doubt but that fortune would throw the means into his hands.

CHAPTER XXX.

GLAMOUR.

WHAT an unnecessary amount of mystical baggage our forefathers carried in their muttered spells and midnight invocations, to bring about results which love, hope, and faith create without any supernatural furniture whatsoever!

Here at Grantley Bourne, a whole chapter of glamour was going on, in which nothing was as it seemed to be, and where everyone was deluded by appearances or deceived by his own desires; and all without the suspicion of a witch to brew a philtre or to work a charm.

Take Lady Machell and her financial and matrimonial schemes, laid with so much skill and wrought out with equal care, and honestly supposed to be the best that could be done for her family:—Jemima and her Captain, she believing in his sincere love for

herself personally, dowry and prospective millions not counting: he in his power of future patient bearing with a woman who said 'la!' and from head to heel was antipathetic to his tastes and uncongenial to his habits:—Derwent, accepting his father's oath as true, and believing that he should one day rise to the level of Hilda's hand and the Machell pride:—Muriel and Arthur counting on the consent of their respective houses as surely as if it were already given:—and Edmund Smith, arguing that a miracle might be wrought in his favour, so that the slippery hand which held the secret of his shame should keep a close grasp, against nature, and never let the ugly truth escape into the keeping of the public;—what a mass of deception from first to last!—what a general belief in the solidity of rainbows and the veracious presentations of glamour!

It made them all happy; and so far might be said to be a gain by those who are not afraid of following after shadows; but it was pitiful to those to whom the dignity of truth is dear, and who would rather live in the barrenest desert of reality than in the loveliest corner of a fool's paradise.

Of all now sunning themselves in the delusive warmth of the hour Arthur and Muriel were the happiest and the most secure. For even Muriel, with the unconscious self-deception of a love so great that it dares not fear, did honestly believe that her mother would give way when Uncle Louis had formally arranged her fortune; and that henceforth no barrier would exist between her and her lover. As things were, she had not much solid foundation for her faith; seeing that her mother was still cold and hard about this matter, and treated it always as a crime when not more lightly as a folly. She refused to talk to her daughter of her engagement, as any other mother would have talked—refused to sympathise with her present joy, her future prospects—would not accept this Machell reconciliation, but kept proudly aloof as one too deeply aggrieved to be able to forgive—would not say more than: 'Sorrow will come of it, Muriel,' though never, straight out: 'I forbid it;'—yet with all this, that subtle something which speaks from heart to heart belied her outward manner, and chance tones and looks, as it were forced from her against her will and almost without her knowledge, made Muriel feel that the core was different from the crust, and that this opposition must be more a matter of mere temper than of fixed principles. It was a natural mistake to make; and she made it.

But if the mother was so strangely hard to her—though sometimes the irrepressible tenderness of her real feeling broke through her sterner seeming and bewildered Muriel with its contradiction—the father made it up to her by his increased sweetness and tenderness. With his kindly weakness of nature, which could not bear

to see sorrow or to meet the stern facts of pain, he wished her to be happy so long as she might; and preferred that she should cherish a hope which was but the other face of despair, rather than see her waken from her dream and know the miserable truth. The mother, left to herself, would at any cost of present suffering have shut out this delusive sunlight, and set the girl's face towards the night and its long darkness which sooner or later she must accept. But the father checked her.

'Let her alone, dear wife,' he pleaded. 'Let her be happy while she can. The truth will come out soon enough.'

'And will be all the harder to bear for the false hopes of the present,' said Mrs. Smith, gently if steadily.

Her husband caressed her in his loving, womanish way. Caresses had always been his favourite arguments, and it was as much a gain to him to stop a mouth with a kiss as to convince a brain by reasoning.

'No! no! let her alone!' he repeated. 'I can sleep better when I know that she is happy. It makes a new man of me, Constance, to see her sweet face look so bright; and God knows,' sighing, 'I have need of all the consolation I can get!'

His wife sighed too. Loving and faithful as she was, this incapacity to bear pain, this weakness which ever sacrificed the future to the present, and preferred the poltroon's falsehood to the strong man's brave confession, even of his guilt, tried her resolute nature even more than the early sin which she had long ago forgiven, and the present sorrow which she was carrying for love. It was always a dead weight which she had to bear on her hands unhelped and alone—always a shifting mass of fluid inconstancy of purpose to which she had to give vital force and compel into a stable form. And even worse, and more than this; what had it not impelled him to do on that day when Derwent gave him the chance of confession, and he had set it aside for the sake of the false peace of a little longer falsehood? That moment of his false swearing had been the bitterest to her of all this bitter history. It was the first time that she had felt a self-acknowledged impulse of aversion from him—the first time that her own sense of right and virtue had risen up in indignant repudiation of his weakness and wrongdoing.

But this too she had borne with and conquered, like all the rest; burying her instinctive horror deep in her heart—with so many others of her dead. It was her duty, she said to herself; her task self-imposed and nobly fulfilled. Was he not her husband? were they not given to each other for better and worse? and if the one died, as he had died in all that constitutes the real life of a brave

man, was not the other bound to carry that body of death to the end, and to conceal with her own life the fact of that pitiful decay? Other women had done the same. Should she, so much more loving than most, be weaker than they? Yet it was painful, all the same; the most painful act in the whole of this tragedy set by a man's criminal weakness and played by a woman's courageous devotion.

'If she could but marry him!' said Edmund Smith yearningly. 'It might never come out, Constance, and then everything would be right. If she could but marry him!' he repeated, turning back on his favourite faith in chances, common to the weak and cowardly.

'She must not,' said Mrs. Smith firmly but always tenderly. 'We owe it to them that they should not be allowed to enter our family.'

'I do not see why, really, when one comes to think of it,' he answered with a shade of petulance.

'Only on the condition that we tell the fact to the whole family; and that then they all, from Sir Gilbert to Arthur himself, fully and freely accept her. Only on this condition, Edmund; on none other. This is a thing in which we must both be firm, darling, for the sake of honour and justice.'

'Ah, there is my worst trial!' he cried with a burst of despair. 'I who love her so much, and I who am going to kill her!'

'No, she loves you too well, dear, to die,' answered his wife; 'she will find her happiness in you as soon as the first sorrow has passed. I know her as I know you; do not be afraid.'

'I know that she loves me, and that my love for her is her happiness, or at least part of it,' he answered. 'But neither father nor mother would have consoled me for the loss of you, Constance, when I was young; nor I think would you have been happy with your people without me.'

'No,' she said: 'you were my life, and always have been.'

'And you mine,' he said; and then wandered off into one of his long love-talks with his wife of times gone by, when both were young and he was innocent, and their fortune was as bright as a polished mirror before a breath has dimmed its lustre or evil chance has marred its perfectness. These love-talks were the most blissful circumstances of Edmund's present life. They represented so much, and made him forget as well as remember. He went back over the past till it became more vivid than the present, till the fool's paradise in which he loved to live was the solid earth, and these fifteen years of shame and disgrace melted away into a thin shadow scarcely discernible. In them he grew young and prosperous

again, and could look the world straight in the face as an honest man should. They were glamour in every essential; but they were the poor weak loving creature's life, and the wife who had devoted herself to him accepted them tenderly and welcomed them as the means by which her husband could make himself content.

But day-dreams for a woman essentially practical and real?—fond memories of past joy to mask the terrible suffering of the coming hour, for one whose whole nature was strong to bear?—is it not easy to see the trial that lay here, and how these hours of memory and caresses carried with them as much pain to the one as they brought solace to the other? Yet this too was in the bond; and Mrs. Smith, industrious and real, sat there in the work-room with her husband, her hand clasped in his, passing the whole afternoon in idle reminiscences of the things which happened before they were engaged and when he was still doubtful if she loved him—of what he felt after they were engaged, and the life they led when they were married—the balls to which they went and the dinners that they gave; the dresses which he chose for her and the summer excursions which they made together—all that happy history of long ago before he had first yielded to temptation and then to despair—before he had forged his uncle's name after that fatal Derby when he had backed the favourite for a fortune and been landed in the mire instead.

What a lifetime ago it was now to her—what a mere yesterday to him, facile and fluid where she was tenacious, impressionable and shiftily where she was resolute! But it made him happy to look back to the closed Eden and live in the past; and his happiness was her reward—as her love for him was her weakness if also her strength.

Their talk to-day was broken in upon by Muriel and Derwent who came back from Machells with the news that perhaps Guy Perceval would not be at the wedding; in which case Derwent was to take his place and be one of the men, as Muriel had already been chosen one of the maids.

'It is very odd,' said Derwent, laughing lightly—the laugh of a conqueror; 'but Muriel and I, who were to have been discarded altogether and sent to Coventry for no one knows what mysterious offence, are now at the top of everything, and the two most mixed up with the wedding of anyone here.'

He flung up his head when he said this, meaning to express his belief that he and his sister had come only to their deserts, and that what had gone before was very much less than their deserts. But for all this little flash of recurrent vanity, he was broader and nobler and less boyishly conceited than of old.

'Are you not glad, papa?' said Muriel, sitting down by her father, and taking his hand in hers.

'Yes, love, very glad,' he answered fondly.

The mother said nothing, though Muriel's yearning eyes turned on her, beseeching her to add her congratulation to the father's. For indeed this public adoption of the two young people counted for much in the present state of affairs.

'I should be happy too, my Muriel, if I believed in its stability,' she said after a pause.

'Oh, mamma! it is stable,' was the answer made with girlish fervour and girlish faith.

'Cassandras are always unwelcome,' said Mrs. Smith with a sad smile. 'But if they have to speak they cannot prophesy smooth things.'

'If you would only say why you do not believe in its stability, then I should understand you better,' Muriel returned.

'Parents cannot always give their reasons to their children,' she answered.

'Your mother is right to warn you not to be too confident, my darling,' said Edmund, with his temporising tenderness. 'It may all come to nothing, and the marriage with you and Mr. Machell may come off all right; or things, you know, dear, may go wrong. It is on the cards always; many a slip between the cup and the lip, you know. And this is all that your mother says. She just wants you to keep that in view, not to let you be too confident. Is it not so, dear?' to his wife.

'Dear papa, how kind and tender you always are to me!' said Muriel gratefully.

Her mother's pale face became paler; and, sad as it always was, even sadder. She loved her daughter—let her nightly sorrows witness how much! but she would not buy present comfort by falsehood; and to feign belief in what she knew must fail, that she might be loved and caressed as her reward, was as impossible to her as the contrary was impossible to her husband.

'I love you, my child;—how then can I be anything else to you but kind and tender?' said Edmund. 'There is no sacrifice that I would not make for you—none!' he added fervently, believing in himself at the moment—quite sure that he would do anything—everything—to ensure his darling's peace.

'I am sure you would, papa,' said Muriel, believing him as sincerely as he believed in himself.

'Happily there is no question of sacrifice anyhow,' said Derwent brightly. Since the explanation with his father he had been like another creature, and his mother's strange fainting fit

had reawakened all his old chivalrous devotion for her, his filial worship and respect. 'The sky has not a cloud!'

'My children! it makes me tremble to see you so confident!' said Mrs. Smith earnestly. 'This world is so full of sorrow and disappointment!'

'And of happiness too, mother,' he answered lovingly. 'Who would not be happy with such a mother!' he added, putting his arm round her neck.

She smoothed his curls for the instant, smiling naturally and fondly.

'There! that is right! now you look like yourself!' he said; 'the sunlight comes back again!'

'Ah, my boy, I am afraid that your flattering tongue was never given you for the good of your soul!' she said playfully.

'And what was not given me for the good of mine, mamma?' asked Muriel, coming over to them and kneeling by her mother's side.

'Yours?' said her mother, still smiling; 'well, your eyes I think!'

Muriel laughed.

'They are true eyes, mamma—are they not, papa?'

'Yes, as true as steel!' said her father, hitching his chair closer to them and making one of the group by patting Muriel's head and taking his wife's hand.

Never since his return had they made such a loving, tender, united little group as this! It was like a new page in a book, a new revelation altogether; and as they sat there and talked and laughed, and made even the mother lay aside her sadness and the father his strange and subtle under-current of timidity, both the children felt that everything was won, and that the sky was, as Derwent had said, absolutely clear and with no thunderbolt to come out of it.

Then suddenly there came a peremptory kind of knock at the door; and, opening it without waiting for an answer, Bob Rushton put in his head and said in an oddly familiar as well as dictatorial manner:—

'I say, will you just step out here for a minute, Mr. Smith, and teach that Taylor of yours his place, and what *I* am in this 'ere house?'

Again, as once before, his answer came in a manner unexpected. In a moment Derwent was upon him, and for the second time the young fellow knocked him down; and it was just the once more which the returned convict could not forgive. For Bob, if a lazy hound, mainly concerned with the problem of how to live without

work, was not the man to take an injury without resenting it—if he could.

So now Derwent Smith had two enmities on hand:—that of Bob Rushton, the returned convict who knew his father's secret; and that of Guy Perceval, the honest country gentleman who had his own designs upon Hilda, and was inflexible in his ideas about the purity of race.

Bob, who was crafty in his own way, picked himself up as he had picked himself up once before in the yard. Contenting himself with a look to Edmund, and retreating out of arm's length of Derwent, he stood for a moment smiling and bowing with that sickening servility which, worse than open insolence, seems as if it courts a second assault. Derwent made a step towards him and ordered him imperiously to get out of his sight; and Bob obeyed, smiling to the end with an air that plainly told he did not mean to be put too much about by such a trifle as this. He had already borne more, all things considered; and one blow extra to a man accustomed to kicking, does not count for much. It would take more than the sudden passion of the young master to dislodge him, having made up his mind as he had done not to be dislodged by anyone or anything.

Had he had a sensitive fibre in his system, his life, such as it was, would have been intolerable to him long ago. Not a servant in the establishment would speak to him; not one would eat with him; and all had given notice to leave because of him. Bob stuck a flower between his lips and his hands in his pockets, and loafed about the place as contentedly as if he had been the chosen king of the company; eating his portion alone with as much appetite as if he had earned it by hard work instead of spending his day in scratching with a light hoe at the utmost four square yards of clean garden ground.

When Derwent came across him, and treated him, as he always did, with a disdain that was more offensive than blows, Bob used to put his cap on one side in a defying kind of manner, stroke his chin and snigger, as the servants called his peculiar half-insolent half-amused laugh. And once he said to the stable-boy:—

‘Young cockerels are bold, Timms; ain't they now? But my belief is, if they knowed who could wring their necks with his tongue and his teeth they'd mend their manners sharp. What do you say, my lad, hey?’

But through it all he had kept faith loyally with his old mate and present master; and, save by his presence here at all, betrayed nothing of the nature of those links which bound him, a convicted thief, to Edmund Smith of Owlett. To-day however the burden



of his fellow creatures' abhorrence weighed on him more heavily than usual. The cook had curtailed his portion and flouted him when he asked for more; Taylor had driven him like a dog from the harness room; even Timms had perked up his head and pecked; and now the young master had knocked him down. And all for what? What had he done worse than others—or, 'weight for age,' so bad as that other?

Decidedly Providence is unfair and life more pain than pleasure, thought Bob in his own way; but when things go wrong, what so good as a comforting drop of drink to put them right? This was his theory and he meant to work it out this evening—no master's man but his own.

Accordingly he slipped away down to the King's Head, where he found by chance George Romer, head coachman at the Manor, who, having more liking for good fellowship than heed as to where he got it, had never been one to turn a cold shoulder to Bob. On the contrary he had been friends with him from the first, liking his company and not delicate as to his history. So the two drew together over their pipes and beer—with a shilling's-worth of gin to keep it steady and give it fire; and in the course of time their talk grew close and confidential as friendly companionship warmed Bob's heart, and the drink, to which he was not used of late, loosened his tongue.

(To be continued.)

Where's Baby?

I

TOTTERING through the flowers,
Tumbling at the box,
Actually hidden
In the holly hocks;
Flourishing a shoekin,
Dropping it to smear
All himself with gravel—
Isn't he a dear!

II

Little knows the rascal
Mamma sees his tricks;
Look at him, the darling,
Tugging at the bricks!
Are his eyes the bluest,
Or the skies above?
Now he's coming—coming!
Oh, he is a love!

III

Not yet! a pebble,
First of all, to munch.
What a dreadful plaything!
Baby—what a lunch!
Yes! no!—he sees me,
Shouts, and shows his toy . . .
That's my bonnie blessing!
That's my clever boy!

The Origin of the Constellation-Figures.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

ALTHOUGH the strange figures which astronomers still allow to straggle over their star maps no longer have any real scientific interest, they still possess a certain charm not only for the student of astronomy, but for many who care little or nothing about astronomy as a science. When I was giving a course of twelve lectures in Boston, America, a person of considerable culture said to me, 'I wish you would lecture about the constellations; I care little about the sun and moon and the planets, and not much more about comets; but I have always felt great interest in the Bears and Lions, the Chained and Chaired Ladies, King Cepheus and the Rescuer, Perseus, Orion, Ophiuchus, Hercules, and the rest of the mythical and fanciful beings with which the old astronomers peopled the heavens. I say with Carlyle, "Why does not someone teach me the constellations, and make me at home in the starry heavens, which are always overhead, and which I don't half know to this day."' We may notice, too, that the poets by almost unanimous consent have recognised the poetical aspect of the constellations, while they have found little to say about subjects which belong especially to astronomy as a science. Milton has indeed made an Archangel reason (not unskilfully for Milton's day) about the Ptolemaic and Copernican systems, while Tennyson makes frequent reference to astronomical theories. 'There sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun, if that hypothesis of theirs be sound,' said *Ida*; but she said no more, save 'let us down and rest,' as though the subject were wearisome to her. Again, in the *Palace of Art*, the soul of the poet having built herself that 'great house so royal rich and wide,' thither,—

. . . when all the deep unsounded skies
 Shuddered with silent stars, she clomb,
 And as with optic glasses her keen eyes
 Pierced through the mystic dome,
 Regions of lucid matter taking forms,
 Brushes of fire, hazy gleams,
 Clusters and beds of worlds and beelike swarms
 Of suns, and starry streams:
 She saw the snowy poles of moonless Mars,
 That marvellous round of milky light
 Below Orion, and those double stars
 Whereof the one more bright
 Is circled by the other.

But the poet's soul so wearied of these astronomical researches that the beautiful lines I have quoted disappeared (more's the pity) from the second and all later editions. Such exceptions, indeed, prove the rule. Poets have been chary in referring to astronomical researches and results, full though these have been of unspeakable poetry; while, from the days of Homer to those of Tennyson, the constellations which garland the heavens have always been favourite subjects of poetic imagery.

It is not my present purpose, however, to discuss the poetic aspect of the constellations. I propose to inquire how these singular figures first found their way to the heavens, and, so far as facts are available for the purpose, to determine the history and antiquity of some of the more celebrated constellations.

Long before astronomy had any existence as a science, men watched the stars with wonder and reverence. Those orbs, seemingly countless—which bespangle the dark robe of night—have a charm and beauty of their own apart from the significance with which the science of astronomy has invested them. The least fanciful mind is led to recognise on the celestial concave the emblems of terrestrial objects, pictured with more or less distinctness among the mysterious star-groupings. We can imagine that long before the importance of the study of the stars was recognised men had begun to associate with certain star-groups the names of familiar objects animate or inanimate. The flocks and herds which the earliest observers of the heavens tended would suggest names for certain sets of stars, and thus the Bull, the Ram, the Kids, would appear in the heavens. Other groups would remind those early observers of the animals from whom they had to guard their flocks, or of those animals to whose vigilance they trusted for protection; and thus the Bear, and the Lion, and the Dogs would find their place among the stars. The figures of men and horses, of birds and fishes, would naturally enough be recognised, nor would either the implements of husbandry or the weapons by which the huntsman secured his prey remain unrepresented among the star-groupings. And lastly, the altar on which the firstfruits of harvest and vintage were presented or the flesh of lambs and goats consumed, would be figured among the innumerable combinations which a fanciful eye can recognise among the orbs of heaven.

In thus suggesting that the first observers of the heavens were shepherds, huntsmen, and husbandmen, I am not advancing a theory on the difficult questions connected with the origin of exact astronomy. The first observations of the heavens were of necessity made by men who depended for their subsistence on a familiarity

with the progress and vicissitudes of the seasons, and doubtless preceded by many ages the study of astronomy as a science. And yet the observations made by those early shepherds and hunters, unscientific though they must have been in themselves, are full of interest to the student of modern exact astronomy. The assertion may seem strange at first sight, but is nevertheless strictly true, that if we could but learn with certainty the names assigned to certain star-groups before astronomy had any real existence, we could deduce lessons of extreme importance from the rough observations which suggested those old names. In these days, when observations of such marvellous exactness are daily and nightly made, when instruments capable of revealing the actual constitution of the stars are employed, and thousands of observers are at work, it may seem strange to attach any interest to the question whether half-savage races recognised in such and such a star-group the likeness of a bear, or in another group the semblance of a ship. But though we could learn more, of course, from exacter observations, yet even such rough and imperfect records would have their value. If we could be certain that in long-past ages a star-group really resembled some known object, we should have in the present resemblance of that group to the same object evidence of the general constancy of stellar lustre, or if no resemblance could be recognised we should have reason to doubt whether other suns (and therefore our own sun) may not be liable to great changes.

The subject of the constellation-figures as first known is interesting in other ways. For instance, it is full of interest to the antiquary (and most of us are to some degree antiquaries) as relating to the most ancient of all human sciences. The same mental quality which causes us to look with interest on the buildings raised in long-past ages, or on the implements and weapons of antiquity, renders the thought impressive that the stars which we see were gazed on perhaps not less wonderingly in the very infancy of the human race. It is, again, a subject full of interest to the chronologist to inquire in what era of the world's history exact astronomy began, when the moon was assigned her twenty-eight zodiacal mansions, the sun his twelve zodiacal signs. It is well known, indeed, that Newton himself did not disdain to study the questions thus suggested; and the speculations of the ingenious Dupuis found favour with the great mathematician Laplace.

Unfortunately, the evidence is not sufficiently exact to be very trustworthy. In considering, for instance, the chronological inquiries of Newton, one cannot but feel that the reliance placed by him on the statements made by different writers, is not justified

by the nature of these statements, which are for the most part vague in the extreme. We owe many of them to poets who, knowing little of astronomy, mixed up the phenomena of their own time with those which they found recorded in the writings of astronomers. Some of the statements left by ancient writers are indeed ludicrously incongruous; insomuch that Grotius not unjustly said of the account of the constellations given by the poet Aratus, that it could be assigned to no fixed epoch and to no fixed place. However, this could not be the place to discuss details such as are involved in exact inquiries. I have indicated some of these in an appendix to my treatise on 'Saturn,' and others in the preface to my 'Gnomonic Star Atlas;' but for the most part they do not admit very readily of familiar description. Let us turn to less technical considerations, which fortunately are in this case fully as much to the point as exact inquiries, seeing that there is no real foundation for such inquiries in any of the available evidence.

The first obvious feature of the old constellations is one which somehow has not received the attention it deserves. It is as instructive as any of those which have been made the subject of profound research.

There is a great space in the heavens over which none of the old constellations extend—except the River Eridanus as now pictured, but we do not know where this winding stream of stars was supposed by the old observers to come to an end. This great space surrounds the southern pole of the heavens, and this shows that the first observers of the stars were not acquainted with the constellations which can be seen only from places far south of Chaldæa, Persia, Egypt, India, China, and indeed of all the regions to which the invention of astronomy has been assigned. Whatever the first astronomers were, however profound their knowledge of astronomy may have been (as some imagine), they had certainly not travelled far enough towards the south to know the constellations around the southern pole. If they had been as well acquainted with geography as some assert, if even any astronomer had travelled as far south as the equator, we should certainly have had pictured in the old star-charts some constellations in that region of the heavens wherein modern astronomers have placed the Octant, the Bird of Paradise, the Sword-fish, the Flying-fish, the Toucan, the Net, and other uncelestial objects.

In passing I may note that this fact disposes most completely of a theory lately advanced that the constellations were invented in the southern hemisphere, and that thus is to be explained the ancient tradition that the sun and stars have changed their courses. For though all the northern constellations would have been more

or less visible from parts of the southern hemisphere near the equator, it is absurd to suppose that a southern observer would leave untenanted a full fourth of the heavens round the southern or visible pole, while carefully filling up the space around the northern or unseen pole with incomplete constellations whose northern unknown portions would include that pole. Supposing it for a moment to be true, as a modern advocate of the southern theory remarks, that 'one of a race migrating from one side to the other of the equator would take his position from the sun, and fancy he was facing the same way when he looked at it at noon, and so would think the motion of the stars to have altered instead of his having turned round,' the theory that astronomy was brought us from south of the equator cannot possibly be admitted in presence of that enormous vacant region around the southern pole. I think, however, that, apart from this, a race so profoundly ignorant as to suppose any such thing, to imagine they were looking north when in reality they were looking south, can hardly be regarded as the first founders of the science of astronomy.

The great gap I have spoken of has long been recognised. But one remarkable feature in its position has not, to the best of my remembrance, been considered. The vacant space is eccentric with regard to the southern pole of the heavens. The old constellations, the Altar, and the Centaur, and the ship Argo, extend within twenty degrees of the pole, while the Southern Fish and the great sea-monster Cetus, which are the southernmost constellations on the other side, do not reach within some sixty degrees of the pole.

Of course, in saying that this peculiarity has not been considered. I am not suggesting that it has not been noticed, or that its cause is in any way doubtful or unknown. We know that the earth, besides whirling once a day on its axis, and rushing on its mighty orbit around the sun (spanning some 184,000,000 of miles), reels like a gigantic top, with a motion so slow that 25,868 years are required for a single circuit of the swaying axis around an imaginary line upright to the plane in which the earth travels. And we know that in consequence of this reeling motion the points of the heavens opposite the earth's poles necessarily change. So that the southern pole, now eccentrically placed amid the region where there were no constellations in old times, was once differently situated. But the circumstance which seems to have been overlooked is this, that by calculating backwards to the time when the southern pole was in the centre of that vacant region, we have a much better chance of finding the date (let us rather say the century) when the older constellations were formed than by any other process. We may be sure not to be led very far astray, for we are not guided

by one constellation but by several, whereas all the other indications which have been followed depend on the supposed ancient position of single constellations. And then most of the other indications are such as might very well have belonged to periods following long after the invention of the constellations themselves. An astronomer might have ascertained, for instance, that the sun in spring was in some particular part of the Ram or of the Fishes, and later a poet like Aratus might describe that relation (erroneously for his own epoch) as characteristic of one or other constellation; but who is to assure us that the astronomer who noted the relation correctly may not have made his observation many hundreds of years after those constellations were invented? Whereas, there was one period, and only one period, when the most southernmost of the old constellations could have marked the limits of the region of sky visible from some northern region. Thus, too, may we form some idea of the latitude in which the first observers lived. For in high latitudes the southernmost of the old constellations would not have been visible at all, and in latitudes much lower than a certain latitude presently to be noted these constellations would have ridden high above the southern horizon, other star-groups showing below them which were not included among the old constellations.

I have before me, as I write, a picture of the southern heavens, drawn by myself, in which this vacant space—eccentric in position but circular in shape—is shown. The centre lies close by the Lesser Magellanic cloud—between the stars Kappa Toucani and Eta Hydri of our modern maps, but much nearer to the last named. Near this spot, then, we may be sure, lay the southern pole of the star-sphere when the old constellations, or at least the southern ones, were invented; and if there had been astronomers in the southern hemisphere, Eta Hydri would certainly have been their pole-star.

Now it is a matter of no difficulty whatever to determine the epoch when the southern pole of the heavens was thus placed.¹ Between 2,100 and 2,200 years before the Christian era the southern constellations had the position described, the invisible southern pole lying at the centre of the vacant space of the star-sphere—or rather of the space free from constellations. It is noteworthy that, for other reasons, this period, or rather a definite epoch within it, is indicated as that to which must be referred the beginning of

¹ It is, by the way, somewhat amusing to find Baron Humboldt referring a question of this sort to the great mathematician Gauss, and describing the problem as though it involved the most profound calculations. Ten minutes should suffice to deal with any problem of the kind.

exact astronomy. Amongst others must be mentioned this—that in the year 2170 B.C., *quam proximè*, the Pleiades rose to their highest above the horizon at noon (or technically made their noon culmination) at the spring equinox. We can readily understand that, to minds possessed with full faith in the influence of the stars on the earth, this fact would have great significance. The changes which are brought about at that season of the year, in reality, of course, because of the gradual increase in the effect of the sun's rays as he rises higher and higher above the celestial equator, would be attributed, in part at least, to the remarkable star-cluster coming then close by the sun on the heavens, though unseen. Thus we can readily understand the reference in Job to the 'sweet influences of the Pleiades.' Again at that same time, 2170 B.C., when the sun and the Pleiades opened the year (with commencing spring) together, the star Alpha of the Dragon, which was the pole-star of the period, had that precise position with respect to the true pole of the heavens which is indicated by the slope of the long passage extending downwards aslant from the northern face of the Great Pyramid; that is to say, when due north below the pole (or at what is technically called its sub-polar meridional passage), the pole-star of the period shone directly down that long passage, and I doubt not could be seen not only when it came to that position during the night, but also when it came there during the daytime.

But some other singular relations are to be noted in connection with the particular epoch I have indicated.

It is tolerably clear that in imagining figures of certain objects in the heavens, the early observers would not be apt to picture these objects in unusual positions. A group of stars may form a figure so closely resembling that of a familiar object that even a wrong position would not prevent the resemblance from being noticed, as for instance the 'Chair,' the 'Plough,' and so forth. But such cases are not numerous; indeed, to say the truth, one must 'make believe a good deal' to see resemblance between the star-groups and most of the constellation-figures, even under the most favourable conditions. When there is no very close resemblance, as is the case with all the large constellations, position must have counted for something in determining the association between a star-group and a known object.

Now, the constellations north of the equator assume so many and such various positions that this special consideration does not apply very forcibly to them. But those south of the equator are only seen above the southern horizon, and change little in position during their progress from east to west of the south point. The

lower down they are, the less they change in position. And the very lowest—such as those were, for instance, which I have been considering in determining the position of the southern pole—are only fully visible when due south. They must, then, in all probability, have stood upright or in their natural position when so placed, for if they were not rightly placed then, they only were so when below the horizon and consequently invisible.

Let us, then, inquire what was the position of the southernmost constellations when fully seen above the southern horizon at midnight.

The Centaur stood then as he does now, upright, only—whereas now in Egypt, Chaldæa, India, Persia, and China, only the upper portions of his figure rise above the horizon, he then stood, the noblest save Orion of all the constellations, with his feet (marked by the bright Alpha and Beta still belonging to the constellation, and by the stars of the Southern Cross which have been taken from it) upon the horizon itself. In latitude twenty degrees or so north he may still be seen thus placed when due south.

The Centaur was represented in old times as placing an offering upon the altar, which was pictured, says Manilius, as bearing a fire of incense, represented by stars. This to a student of our modern charts seems altogether perplexing. The Centaur carries the wolf on the end of his spear; but instead of placing the wolf (not a very acceptable meat-offering, one would suppose) upon the altar, he is directing this animal towards the base of the altar, whose top is downwards, the flames represented there tending naturally downwards also. It is quite certain the ancient observers did not imagine anything of this sort. As I have said, Aratus tells us that the celestial Centaur was placing an offering upon the altar, which was therefore upright; and Manilius describes the altar as

Ferens thuris, stellis imitantibus, ignem,

so that the fire was where it should be, on the top of an upright altar, where also on the sky itself were stars looking like the smoke from incense fires. Now that was precisely the appearance presented by the stars forming the constellation at the time I have indicated, some 2170 years B.C. Setting the altar upright above the southern horizon (that is, inverting the absurd picture at present given of it), we see it just where it should be placed to receive the Centaur's offering, and a most remarkable portion of the Milky Way is then seen to be directly above the altar in such a way as to form a very good imitation of smoke ascending from it. This part of the Milky Way is described by Sir J. Herschel, who studied it carefully during his stay at the Cape of Good Hope,

as forming a complicated system of interlaced streaks and masses which covers the tail of Scorpio (extending from the altar which lies immediately south of the Scorpion's Tail). The Milky Way divides, in fact, just above the altar as the constellation was seen 4,000 years ago above the southern horizon, one branch being that just described, the other (like another stream of smoke) 'passing,' says Herschel, 'over the stars Iota of the Altar, Theta and Iota of the Scorpion, &c., to Gamma of the Archer, where it suddenly collects into a vivid oval mass, so very rich in stars that a very moderate calculation makes their number exceed 100,000.' Nothing could accord better with the descriptions of Aratus and Manilius.

But there is another constellation which shows in a more marked way than either the Centaur or the Altar that the date when the constellations were invented must have been near that which I have named. Both Ara and Centaurus look now, in suitable latitudes (about twenty degrees north), as they looked in higher latitudes (about forty degrees north) 4,000 years ago. For the reeling motion of our earth has changed the place of the celestial pole in such a way as only to depress these constellations southwards without much changing their *position*; they are nearly upright when due south now as they were 4,000 years ago, only lower down. But the great ship Argo has suffered a much more serious displacement. One cannot now see this ship like a ship at any time or from any place on the earth's surface. If we travel south till the whole constellation comes into visibility above the southern horizon at the proper season (January and February for the midnight hours) the keel of the ship is aslant, the stern being high above the waist (the fore part is wanting). If we travel still further south, we can indeed reach places where the course of the ship is so widened, and the changes of position so increased, that she appears along part of her journey on an even keel, but then she is high above the horizon. Now, 4,000 years ago she stood on the horizon itself at her southern culmination, with level keel and upright mast.

In passing I may note that there are those who imagine that this great ship represented the Ark, its fore part formerly being the portion of the Centaur now forming the horse, so that the Centaur was represented as a man (not as a man-horse) offering a gift on the Altar. Thus in this group of constellations men recognised the Ark, and Noah going up from the Ark towards the altar 'which he builded unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.' One heretic has even imagined that the constellation-figures of the Ship, the Man with an offering, and the Altar, painted or sculptured

in some ancient astrological temple, came at a later time to be understood as picturing a certain series of events, interpreted and expanded by a poetical writer into a complete narrative. Without venturing to advocate here so heterodox a notion, I may remark as an odd coincidence that probably such a picture or sculpture would have shown the smoke ascending from the Altar which I have already described, and in this smoke there would be shown the bow of Sagittarius. This, interpreted and expanded in the way I have mentioned, might have accounted for the 'bow set in the clouds, for a token of a covenant.' It is noteworthy that all the remaining constellations forming the southern limit of the old star-domes or charts, were watery ones—the Southern Fish, over which Aquarius is pouring a quite unnecessary stream of water, the Great Sea Monster towards which in turn flow the streams of the River Eridanus. The equator, too, was then occupied along a great part of its length by the great sea serpent Hydra, which reared its head above the equator, very probably indicated then by a water horizon, for nearly all the signs below it were then watery. At any rate, as the length of Hydra then lay horizontally above the Ship, whose masts reached it, we may well believe that this part of the picture of the heavens showed a sea horizon and a ship, the great sea serpent lying along the horizon. On the back of Hydra is the Raven, which again may be supposed by those who accept the theory mentioned above to have suggested the raven which went forth to and fro from the ark. He is close enough to the rigging of Argo to make an easy journey of it. The dove, however, must not be confounded with the modern constellation Columba, though this is placed (suitably enough) near the Ark. We must suppose the idea of the dove was suggested by a bird pictured in the rigging of the celestial ship. The sequence in which the constellations came above the horizon as the year went round corresponded very satisfactorily with the theory, fanciful though this may be. First Aquarius pouring streams of water, the three fishes (Pisces and Piscis australis), and the great sea monster Cetus, showing how the waters prevailed over the highest hills, then the Ark sailing on the waters, a little later the Raven (Corvus), the man descending from the Ark and offering a gift on the Altar; and last, the Bow set amid the clouds.

The theory just described may have little in its favour. But wilder theories of the story of the deluge have been adopted and advocated with considerable confidence. One of the wildest, I fear, is the Astronomer-Royal's, that the deluge was simply a great rising of the Nile. Sir G. Airy is so confident respecting this that he says, 'I cannot entertain the smallest doubt that the

flood of Noah was a flood of the Nile,' precisely as he might say, 'I cannot entertain the smallest doubt that the earth moves round the sun.' On one point we can entertain very little doubt indeed. If it ever rained before the flood, which seems probable, and if the sun ever shone on falling rain, which again seems likely, nothing short of a miracle could have prevented the rainbow from making its appearance before the flood. The wildest theory that can be invented to explain the story of the deluge cannot be wilder than the supposition that the rays of sunlight shining on falling raindrops could have ever failed to show the prismatic colours. The theory I have suggested above, without going so far as to advocate it, is free at any rate from objection on this particular score, which cannot be said of the ordinary theory. I am not yet able, however, to say that 'I cannot entertain the smallest doubt' about that theory.

We may feel tolerably sure that the period when the old southern constellations were formed must have been between 2,400 and 2,000 years before the present era. This period, by the way, includes the date usually assigned to the deluge, which, however, must really occupy our attention no further. In fact, let us leave the watery constellations below the equator of those remote times and seek at once the highest heavens above them.

Here, at the northern pole of those days, we find the great Dragon, which in any astrological temple of the time must have formed the highest or crowning constellation, surrounding the very key-stone of the dome. He has fallen away from that proud position since. In fact, even 4,000 years ago he only held to the pole, so to speak, by his tail, and we have to travel further back 2,000 years or so to find the pole situate in a portion of the length of the Dragon which can be regarded as central. One might almost, if fancifully disposed, recognise the gradual displacement of the Dragon from his old place of honour, in certain traditions of the downfall of the great Dragon whose 'tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven.'

The central position of the Dragon—for even when the pole-star had drawn near to the Dragon's tail the constellation was still central—will remind the classical reader of Homer's description of the Shield of Hercules—

The scaly horror of a dragon, coil'd
Full in the central field, unspeakable,
With eyes oblique retorted, that ascant
Shot gleaming fire. (*Elton's translation.*)

I say Homer's description, for I cannot understand how any one who compares together the description of the Shield of Achilles in the

Iliad and that of the Shield of Hercules in the fragmentary form in which we have it, can doubt for a moment that both descriptions came from the same hand. (The theory that Hesiod composed the latter poem can scarcely be entertained by any scholar.) As I long since pointed out in my essay, 'A New Theory of Achilles' Shield' ('Light Science,' first series), no poet so inferior as actually to borrow Homer's words in part of the description of the Shield of Hercules could have written the other parts not found in the Shield of Achilles. 'I cannot for my own part entertain the smallest doubt'—that is to say, I think it altogether probable—that Homer composed the lines supposed to describe the Shield of Hercules long before he introduced the description, pruned and strengthened, into that particular part of the *Iliad* where it served his purpose best. And I have as little doubt that the original description of which we only get fragments in either poem related to something far more important than a shield. The constellations are not suitable adornments for the shield of a fighting man, even though he was under the special care of a celestial mother, and had armour made for him by a celestial smith. Yet we learn that Achilles' shield displayed—

The starry lights that heav'n's high convex crown'd,
The Pleiads, Hyads, and the northern beam,
And great Orion's more refulgent beam,
To which, around the cycle of the sky,
The Bear revolving, points his golden eye,
Still shines exalted on th' aethereal plain,

and so forth. The Shield of Hercules displayed at its centre the polar constellation the Dragon. We read also that—

There was the knight of fair-hair'd Danae born,
Perseus.

Orion is not specially mentioned, but Orion, *Lepus*, and the Dogs seem referred to:—

Men of chase
Were taking the fleet hares ; two keen-toothed dogs
Bounded beside.

Homer would find no difficulty in pluralising the mighty Hunter and the hare into huntsmen and hares when utilising a description originally referring to the constellation. I conceive that the original description related to one of those zodiac temples whose remains are still found in Egypt, though the Egyptian temples of this kind were probably only copies of more ancient Chaldean temples. We know from Assyrian sculptures that representations of the constellations (and especially the zodiacal constellations) were common among the Babylonians ; and, as I point out in the essay above referred to, 'it seems probable that in a country where Sabæanism or star-worship

was the prevailing form of religion, yet more imposing proportions would be given to zodiac temples than in Egypt.' My theory, then, respecting the two famous 'Shields' is that Homer in his eastern travels visited imposing temples devoted to astronomical observation and star-worship, and that nearly every line in both descriptions is borrowed from a poem in which he described a temple of this sort, its domed zodiac, and those illustrations of the labours of different seasons and of military or judicial procedures which the astrological proclivities of star-worshippers led them to associate with the different constellations. For the arguments on which this theory is based I have not here space. They are dealt with in the essay from which I have quoted. One point only I need touch upon here, besides those I have mentioned already. It may be objected that the description of a zodiac temple has nothing to connect it with the subject of the *Iliad*. This is certainly true; but no one who is familiar with Homer's manner can doubt that he would work in, if he saw the opportunity, a poem on some subject outside that of the *Iliad*, so modifying the language that the description would correspond with the subject in hand. There are many passages, though none of such length, in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which seem thus to have been brought into the poem; and other passages not exactly of this kind yet show that Homer was not insensible to the advantage of occasionally using memory instead of invention.

Any one who considers attentively the aspect of the constellation Draco in the heavens will perceive that the drawing of the head in the maps is not correct; the head is no longer pictured as it must have been conceived by those who first formed the constellation. The two bright stars Beta and Gamma are now placed on a head in profile. Formerly they marked the two eyes. I would not lay stress on the description of the Dragon in the Shield of Hercules, 'with eyes oblique retorted, that ascant shot gleaming fire;' for the reader may not be prepared to accept my opinion that that description related to the constellation Draco. But the description of the constellation itself by Aratus suffices to show that the two bright stars I have named marked the eyes of the imagined monster—in fact, Aratus's account singularly resembles that given in the Shield of Hercules. 'Swol'n is his neck,' says Aratus of the Dragon—

. . . Eyes charg'd with sparkling fire
His crested head illume. As if in ire
To Helice he turns his foaming jaw,
And darts his tongue, barb'd with a blazing star.

And the dragon's head with sparkling eyes can be recognised to

this day, so soon as this change is made in its configuration, whereas no one can recognise the remotest resemblance to a dragon's head in profile. The star barbing the Dragon's tongue would be Xi of the Dragon according to Aratus's account, for so only would the eyes be turned towards Helice the Bear. But when Aratus wrote, the practice of separating the constellations from each other had been adopted; in fact, he derived his knowledge of them chiefly from Eudoxus the astronomer and mathematician, who certainly would not have allowed the constellations to be intermixed. In the beginning, there are reasons for believing it was different; and if a group of stars resembled any known object it would be called after that object, even though some of the stars necessary to make up the figure belonged already to some other figure. This being remembered, we can have no difficulty in retorting the Dragon's head more naturally—not to the star Xi of the Dragon, but to the star Iota of Hercules. The four stars are

situated thus, * * the larger ones representing the eyes, and so

far as the head is concerned it is a matter of indifference whether the lower or the upper small star be taken to represent the tongue. But, as any one will see who looks at these stars when the Dragon is best placed for (ordinary non-telescopic) observation, the attitude of the animal is far more natural when the star Iota of Hercules marks the tongue, for then the creature is situated like a winged serpent hovering above the horizon and looking downwards, whereas when the star Xi marks the tongue, the hovering Dragon is looking upwards and is in an unnaturally constrained position. (I would not, indeed, claim to understand perfectly all the ways of dragons; still it may be assumed that a dragon hovering above the horizon would rather look downwards in a natural position than upwards in an awkward one.)

The star Iota of Hercules marks the heel of this giant, called the Kneeler (Engonasin) from time immemorial. He must have been an important figure on the old zodiac temples, and not improbably his presence there as one of the largest and highest of the human figures may have caused a zodiac dome to be named after Hercules. The Dome of Hercules would come near enough to the title, 'The Shield of Hercules,' borne by the fragmentary poem dealt with above. The foot of the kneeling man was represented on the head of the dragon, the dragon having hold of the heel. And here, again, some imagine that a sculptured representation of these imagined figures in the heavens may have been interpreted and expanded into the narrative of a contest between

the man and the old serpent the dragon, Ophiuchus the serpent-bearer being supposed to typify the eventual defeat of the dragon. This fancy might be followed out like that relating to the deluge; but the reader has possibly no desire for further inquiries in that particular direction.

Some interest attaches to the constellation Ophiuchus, to my mind, in the evidence it affords respecting the way in which the constellations were at first intermixed. I have mentioned one instance in which, as I think, the later astronomers separated two constellations which had once been conjoined. Many others can be recognised when we compare the actual star-groups with the constellation-figures as at present depicted. No one can recognise the poop of a ship in the group of stars now assigned to the stern of Argo; but if we include the stars of the Greater Dog, and others close by, a well-shaped poop can be clearly seen. The head of the Lion of our maps is as the head of a dog, so far as stars are concerned; but if stars from the Crab on one side and from Virgo on the other be included in the figure, and especially Berenice's Hair to form the tuft of the lion's tail, a very fine lion with waving mane can be discerned, with a slight effort of the imagination. So with Bootes the herdsman. He was of old 'a fine figure of a man,' waving aloft his arms, and, as his name implies, shouting lustily at the retreating bear. Now, and from some time certainly preceding that of Eudoxus, one arm has been lopped off to fashion the northern crown, and the herdsman holds his club as close to his side as a soldier holds his shouldered musket. The constellation of the Great Bear, once I conceive the only bear (though the lesser bear is a very old constellation), has suffered woefully. Originally it must have been a much larger bear, the stars now forming the tail marking part of the outline of the back; but first some folks who were unacquainted with the nature of bears turned the three stars (the horses of the plough) into a long tail, abstracting from the animal all the corresponding portion of his body, and then modern astronomers finding a great vacant space where formerly the bear's large frame extended, incontinently formed the stars of this space into a new constellation, the Hunting Dogs. No one can recognise a bear in the constellation as at present shaped; but any one who looks attentively at the part of the skies occupied by the constellation will recognise (always 'making believe a good deal') a monstrous bear, with the proper small head of creatures of the bear family, and with exceedingly well-developed plantigrade feet. Of course this figure cannot at all times be recognised with equal facility; but before midnight during the last four or five months in the year, the bear occupies

positions favouring his recognition, being either upright on his feet, or as if descending a slope, or squatting on his great haunches. As a long-tailed animal the creature is more like one of those wooden toy monkeys which used to be made for children (and may be now), in which the sliding motion of a ringed rod carried the monkey over the top of a stick. The Little Bear has I think been borrowed from the dragon, which was certainly a winged monster originally.

Now, the astronomers who separated from each other (and in so doing spoiled) the old constellation-figures, seem to have despaired of freeing Ophiuchus from his entanglements. The Serpent is twined around his body, the Scorpion is clawing at one leg. The constellation-makers have *per fas et nefas* separated Scorpio from the Serpent Holder, spoiling both figures. But the Serpent has been too much for them, insomuch that they have been reduced to the abject necessity of leaving one part of the Serpent on one side of the region they allow to Ophiuchus, and the other part of the Serpent on the other.

A group of constellations whose origin and meaning are little understood remains to be mentioned. Close by the Dragon is King Cepheus; beside him his wife Cassiopeia (the Seated Lady), near whom is Andromeda the Chained Lady. The Sea Monster Cetus is not far away, though not near enough to threaten her safety, the Ram and Triangle being between the monster's head and her feet, the Fishes intervening between the body of the monster and her fair form. Close at hand is Perseus, the Rescuer, with a sword (looking very much like a reaping-hook in all the old pictures) in his right hand, and bearing in his left the head of Medusa. The general way of accounting for the figures thus associated has been by supposing that, having a certain tradition about Cepheus and his family, men imagined in the heavens the pictorial representation of the events of the tradition. I have long believed that the actual order in this and other cases was the reverse of this—that men imagined certain figures in the heavens, pictured these figures in their astronomical temples or observatories, and made stories afterwards to fit the pictures, probably many generations afterwards. Be this as it may, we can at present give no satisfactory account of the group of constellations.

Wilford describes, in his 'Asiatic Researches,' a conversation with a pundit or astronomer respecting the names of the Indian constellations. 'Asking him,' he says, 'to show me in the heavens the constellation Antarmada, he immediately pointed to Andromeda, though I had not given him any information about it

beforehand. He afterwards brought me a very rare and curious work in Sanscrit, which contained a chapter devoted to *Upanachutras*, or extra-zodiacal constellations, with drawings of *Cupupi* (Cepheus) and of *Cassipi* (Cassiopeia) seated and holding a lotus-flower in her hand, of Antarmada charmed with the Fish beside her, and last of *Paraseia* (Perseus), who, according to the explanation of the book, held the head of a monster which he had slain in combat; blood was dropping from it, and for hair it had snakes.' Some have inferred from the circumstance that the Indian charts thus showed the Cassiopeian set of constellations, that the origin of these figures is to be sought in India. But probably both the Indian and the Greek constellation-figures were derived from a much older source.

The zodiacal twelve are in some respects the most important and interesting of all the ancient constellations. If we could determine the origin of these figures, their exact configuration as at first devised, and the precise influences assigned to them in the old astrological systems, we should have obtained important evidence as to the origin of astronomy itself. Not, indeed, that the twelve signs of the zodiac were formed at the beginning or even in the early infancy of astronomy. It seems abundantly clear that the division of the zodiac (which includes the moon's track as well as the sun's) had reference originally to the moon's motions. She circuits the star-sphere in about twenty-seven and a third days, while the lunation or interval from new moon to new moon is, as we all know, about twenty-nine and a half days in length. It would appear that the earliest astronomers, who were of course astrologers also, of all nations—the Indian, Egyptian, Chinese, Persian, and Chaldean astronomers—adopted twenty-eight days (probably as a rough mean between the two periods just named) as their chief lunar period, and divided the moon's track round the ecliptic into twenty-eight portions or mansions. How they managed about the fractions of days outstanding—whether the common lunation was considered or the moon's motion round the star-sphere—is not known. The very circumstance, however, that they were for a long time content with their twenty-eight lunar mansions shows that they did not seek great precision at first. Doubtless they employed some rough system of 'leap-months' by which, as occasion required, the progress of the month was reconciled with the progress of the moon, just as by our leap-years the progress of the year is reconciled with the progress of the sun or seasons.

The use of the twenty-eight-day period naturally suggested the division of time into weeks of seven days each. The ordi-

nary lunar month is divided in a very obvious manner into four equal parts by the lunar aspects. Everyone can recognise roughly the time of full moon and the times of half-moon before and after full, while the time of new moon is recognised from these two last epochs. Thus the four quarters of the month, or roughly the four weeks of the month, would be the first time measure thought of, after the day, which is the necessary foundation of all time measures. The nearest approach which can be made to a quarter-month in days is the week of seven days; and although some little awkwardness arose from the fact that four weeks differ appreciably from a lunar month, this would not long prevent the adoption of the week as a measure of time. In fact, just as our years begin on different days of the week without causing any inconvenience, so the ancient months might be made to begin with different week-days. All that would be necessary to make the week measure fairly well the quarters of the month, would be to start each month on the proper or nearest week-day. To inform people about this some ceremony could be appointed for the day of the new moon, and some signal employed to indicate the time when this ceremony was to take place. This—the natural and obvious course—we find, was the means actually adopted, the festival of the new moon and the blowing of trumpets in the new moon being an essential part of the arrangements adopted by nations who adopted the week as a chief measure of time. The seven days were not affected by the new moons so far as the nomenclature of these days, or special duties connected with any one of them, might be concerned. Originally the idea may have been to have festivals and sacrifices at the time of new moon, first quarter, full moon, and third quarter; but this arrangement would naturally (and did, as we know, actually) give way before long to a new moon festival regulating the month, and seven daily festivals, each class of festival having its appropriate sacrifices and duties.

This, I say, was the natural cause. Its adoption *may* have been aided by the recognition of the fact that the seven planets of the old system of astronomy might conveniently be taken to rule the days and the hours in the way described in my essay on Astrology. That that nomenclature and that system of association between the planets and the hours, days, and weeks of time measurement was eventually adopted, is certain; but whether the convenience and apparent mystical fitness of this arrangement led at all to the use of weekly festivals in conjunction with monthly ones, or whether those weekly festivals were first adopted in the way described above, or whether (which seems

altogether more likely) both sets of considerations led to the arrangement, we cannot certainly tell. The arrangement was in every way a natural one and one may say, considering all the circumstances, that it was almost an inevitable one. There was, however, another possible arrangement, viz. the division of time into ten daily periods, three to each month, with corresponding new moon festivals. But as the arrival of the moon at the *thirds* of her progress are not at all so well marked as her arrival at the quarters, and as there is no connection between the number ten and the planets, this arrangement was far less likely to be adopted than the other. Accordingly we find that only one or two nations adopted it. Six sets of five days would be practically the same arrangement; five sets of six for each month would scarcely be thought of, as with that division the use of simple direct observations of the moon for time measurement, which was the real aim of all such divisions, would not be convenient or indeed even possible for the generality of persons. Few could tell easily when the moon is two-fifths or four-fifths full, whereas every one can tell when she is half-full or quite full (the requisite for weekly measurement); and it would be *possible* to guess pretty nearly when she is one-third or two-thirds full, the requisite for the tridecennial division.

My object in the above discussion of the origin of the week (as distinguished from the origin of the Sabbath, which I considered in my paper on Astrology), has been to show that the use of the twelve zodiacal signs was in every case preceded by the use of the twenty-eight lunar mansions. It has been supposed that those nations in whose astronomy the twenty-eight mansions still appear adopted one system, while the use of the twelve signs implies that another system had been adopted. Thus the following passage occurs in Mr. Blake's version of Flammarion's 'History of the Heavens':—'The Chinese have twenty-eight constellations, though the word *sion* does not mean a group of stars, but simply a mansion or hotel. In the Coptic and ancient Egyptian the word for constellation has the same meaning. They also had twenty-eight, and the same number is found among the Arabians, Persians, and Indians. Among the Chaldeans or Accadians we find no sign of the number twenty-eight. The ecliptic, or "yoke of the sky," with them, as we see in the newly-discovered tablets, was divided into twelve divisions, as now; and the only connection that can be imagined between this and the twenty-eight is the opinion of M. Biot, who thinks that the Chinese had originally only twenty-four mansions, four more being added by Chenkung, 1100 B.C., and that they corresponded with the twenty-four stars, twelve to the north and

twelve to the south, that marked the twelve signs of the zodiac among the Chaldæans. But under this supposition the twenty-eight has no reference to the moon, whereas we have every reason to believe it has.' The last observation is undoubtedly correct—the twenty-eight mansions have been mansions of the moon from the beginning. But in this very circumstance, as also in the very tablets referred to in the preceding passage, we find all the evidence needed to show that originally the Chaldæans divided the zodiac into twenty-eight parts. For we find from the tablets that, like the other nations who had twenty-eight zodiacal mansions, the Chaldæans used a seven-day period, derived from the moon's motions, every seventh day being called *sabbatu*, and held as a day of rest. We may safely infer that the Chaldæan astronomers, advancing beyond those of other nations, recognised the necessity of dividing the zodiac with reference to the sun's motions instead of the moon's. They therefore discarded the twenty-eight lunar mansions, and adopted instead twelve solar signs; this number twelve, like the number twenty-eight itself, being selected merely as the most convenient approximation to the number of parts into which the zodiac was naturally divided by another period. Thus the twenty-eighth part of the zodiac corresponds roughly with the moon's daily motion, and the twelfth part of the zodiac corresponds roughly with the moon's monthly motion; and both the numbers twenty-eight and twelve admit of being subdivided, whereas twenty-nine (a nearer approach than twenty-eight to the number of days in a lunation) and thirteen (almost as near an approach as twelve to the number of months in a year) do not.

It seems to me highly probable that the date to which all inquiries into the origin of the constellations and the zodiacal signs seems to point—viz., 2170 B.C.—was the date at which the Chaldæan astronomers definitely adopted the new system, the luni-solar instead of lunar division of the zodiac and of time. One of the objects which the architects of the Great Pyramid (not the king who built it) may have had, was not improbably this—the erection of a building indicating the epoch when the new system was entered upon, and defining in its proportions, its interior passages, and other features, the fundamental elements of the new system. The great difficulty, an overwhelming difficulty it has always seemed to me, in accepting the belief that the year 2170 B.C. defined the beginning of exact astronomy, has been this—that several of the circumstances insisted upon as determining that date imply a considerable knowledge of astronomy. Thus astronomers must have made great progress in their science before they could select, as a date for counting from, the epoch when the slow reeling motion of

the earth (the so-called precessional motion) brought the Pleiades centrally south at the time of the vernal equinox. The construction of the Great Pyramid, again, in all its astronomical features, implies considerable proficiency in astronomical observation. Thus the year 2170 B.C. may very well be regarded as defining the introduction of a new system of astronomy, but certainly not the beginning of astronomy itself. Of course we may cut the knot of this difficulty, as Professor Smyth and Abbé Moigno do, by saying that astronomy began 2170 B.C., the first astronomers being instructed supernaturally, so that the astronomical Minerva came full-grown into being. But I apprehend that argument against such a belief is as unnecessary as it would certainly be useless.

And now let us consider how this theory accords with the result to which we were led by the position of the great vacant space around the southern pole. So far as the date is concerned, we have already seen that the epoch 2170 B.C. accords excellently with the evidence of the vacant space. But this evidence, as I mentioned at the outset, establishes more than the date; it indicates the latitude of the place where the most ancient of Ptolemy's forty-eight constellations were first definitely adopted by astronomers. If we assume that at this place the southernmost constellations were just fully seen when due south, we find for the latitude about thirty-eight degrees north. (The student of astronomy who may care to test my results may be reminded here that it is not enough to show that every star of a constellation would when due south be above the horizon of the place,—what is wanted is, that the whole constellation when towards the south should be visible at a single view. However, the whole constellation may not have included all the stars now belonging to it.) The station of the astronomers who founded the new system can scarcely have been more than a degree or two north of this latitude. On the other side, we may go a little farther, for by so doing we only raise the constellations somewhat higher above the southern horizon, to which there is less objection than to a change thrusting part of the constellations below the horizon. Still, it may be doubted whether the place where the constellations were first formed was less than 32 or 33 degrees north of the equator. The Great Pyramid, as we know, is about 30 degrees north of the equator; but we also know that its architects travelled southwards to find a suitable place for it. One of their objects may well have been to obtain a fuller view of the star-sphere south of their constellations. I think from 35 to 39 degrees north would be about the most probable limits, and from 32 to 41 degrees north the certain limits of the station of the first founders of solar zodiacal astronomy. What their actual

station may have been is not so easily established. Some think the region lay between the sources of the Oxus (Amoor) and Indus; others think that the station of these astronomers was not very far from Mount Ararat—a view to which I was led long ago by other considerations, discussed in the first appendix to my treatise on ‘Saturn and its System.’

At the epoch indicated, the first constellation of the zodiac was not, as now, the Fishes, nor, as when a fresh departure was made by Hipparchus, the Ram, but the Bull, a trace of which is found in Virgil’s words,

*Candidus auratis aperit cum cornibus annum
Taurus.*

The Bull then was the spring sign, the Pleiades and ruddy Aldebaran joining their rays with the sun’s at the time of the vernal equinox. The midsummer sign was the Lion (the bright Cor Leonis nearly marking the sun’s highest place). The autumn sign was the Scorpion, the ruddy Antares and the stars clustering in the head of the Scorpion joining their rays with the sun’s at the time of the autumnal equinox. And, lastly, the winter sign was the Water Bearer, the bright Fomalhaut conjoining his rays with the sun’s at midwinter. It is noteworthy that all these four constellations really present some resemblance to the objects after which they are named. The Scorpion is in the best drawing; but the Bull’s head is well marked, and, as already mentioned, a leaping Lion can be recognised. The streams of stars from the urn of Aquarius and the Urn itself are much better defined than the Urn Bearer.

I have not left myself much space to speak of the finest of all the constellations, the glorious Orion—the Giant in his Might, as he was called of old. In this noble asterism the figure of a giant ascending a slope can be readily discerned when the constellation is due south. At the time to which I have referred the constellation Orion was considerably below the equator, and instead of standing nearly upright when due south high above the horizon, as now in our northern latitudes, he rose upright above the south-eastern horizon. The resemblance to a giant figure must then have been even more striking than it is at present (except in high northern latitudes, where Orion, when due south, is just fully above the horizon). The giant Orion has long been identified by nations with Nimrod; and those who recognise the antetypes of the Ark in Argo, of the old dragon in Draco, and of the first and second Adams in the kneeling Hercules defeated by the serpent, and the upright Ophiuchus triumphant over the serpent, may, if they so

please, find in the giant Orion, the Two Dogs, the Hare, and the Bull (whom Orion is more directly dealing with) the representations of Nimrod, 'that mighty hunter before the Lord,' his hunting dogs, and the animals he hunted. Pegasus, formerly called the Horse, was regarded in very ancient times as the steed of Nimrod.

In modern astronomy the constellations no longer have the importance which once attached to them. They afford convenient means of naming the stars, though I think many observers would prefer the less attractive but more business-like methods adopted by Piazzi and others, by which a star rejoices in no more striking title than Piazzi XIIIh. 273, or Struve 2819. They still serve, however, to teach beginners the stars, and probably many years will pass before even exact astronomy dismisses them altogether to the limbo of discarded symbolisms. It is, indeed, somewhat singular that astronomers find it easier to introduce new absurdities among the constellations than to get rid of these old ones. The new and utterly absurd figures introduced by Bode still remain in many charts despite such inconvenient names as *Honores Frederici*, *Globum Aerostaticum*, and *Machina Pneumatica*; and I have very little doubt that a new constellation, if it only had a specially inconvenient title, would be willingly accepted. But when Francis Baily tried to simplify the heavens by removing many of Bode's absurd constellations, he was abused by many as violently as though he had proposed the rejection of the Newtonian system. I myself tried a small measure of reform in the first three editions of my 'Library Atlas,' but have found it desirable to return to the old nomenclature in the fourth.

A Story of the Transvaal.

THE Cape boer, and especially he of the Transvaal, is a creature beyond all understanding. To converse with him, you would think that the interests of farm and stock bounded his care of things sublunary. To watch his life, you might suppose that it rested on the purest dogmatic religion. To measure his huge limbs, tallowy and flaccid, to observe his ox-like eye and movements ponderously doubting, you would pronounce him the mildest of humanity. And in each of these conclusions you would be curiously mistaken. The boer has feelings, if not principles, of such strength that he has sacrificed his all for them. Not once nor twice, but thrice already he has left home and flock rather than endure a foreign rule. No oppression weighed on him. The little finger of his chosen governors was heavier than our English loins. He made not even protests, asked no redress, but rose and went into the wilderness. The piety also which sits so close upon him is to be mistrusted. Sincere it is, of its kind, for a man takes no profit from hypocrisy out yonder; but it does not often bar him from acts that we think criminal when temptation rises, nor from such vice as his slow imagination can fancy. The simple boer displays an ingenuity quite surprising in fraudulent law-practice, and his moral courage in a bad cause would be believed by no one who had not dealt with him. Yet no man is easier to cheat. Though his own title-deeds be forged, he credits those of his neighbour. I had once occasion to look into the title of Vooruitzicht—the farm now christened Kimberley, but famous through all time as New Rush Diamond Field. That property was sold upon the strength of a registered division or settlement which proved on later investigation to be a forgery. Thereupon the legal heirs brought an action, which they lost on evidence that their own title-deeds were false. The partition being forged, and the last title fraudulent, new claimants arose, who depended on a deed of gift which was found to be unregistered. Vooruitzicht had been lost at cards—the biggest stake ever played on earth!—but the boer, recovering his senses after a nap, declined to fulfil the bargain. These claims were severally adjudicated, and half-a-dozen others had cropped up, when Government stepped in and closed all litigation, paying 100,000*l.* for the property. Each of the plaintiffs knew, and was proved to know, that his case rested on a falsehood. In spite of that evidence, I am not prepared to

dispute their honesty in general, nor their profound sense of religion. Is not the boer beyond understanding?

It seems likely that his habits and peculiarities will command our attention, of an *ex-post-facto* sort may be, in a very little while. Though the boer be slow, the Kaffir is monstrous quick, and it is he who drives at present. There is not in history, perhaps, the record of a peaceful change so great, in so short a time, as that effected in South Africa by the discovery of diamonds. Its economical results have scarcely begun to appear, for the bent of a pastoral race, in debt beyond all visible hope of payment, is to hoard. But the political effect was manifest from the beginning. All the Kaffir tribes round, all the Bastards and Corannas, acquired arms by their labour in the diamond fields. As early as 1871, three months after the 'rush,' it became evident that the importation of fire-arms could not be stopped, nor could the blacks be prevented from earning them. But the boers changed none of their overbearing tactics, the nature of which I am about to show in a curious tale.

Returning from South Africa, in 1872, amongst my shipmates was a shy old Hollander who held communication with none of us. A few words of Spanish which I chanced to use drew him from his shell at length. It warmed his heart, he told me, to catch accents which, to my unbiassed ear, seem a commingling of lisp and snarl and scream. Speaking no English and very little French, he could talk with no one but myself. But our conversation flagged; Dr. Treksteer carried formality so far as to ask no information when imparting none—a fine trait and, in my experience, unusual. Where he came from, and what he had been doing in those parts, I should never have heard, most likely, save for an accident—which I have been regretting ever since, for good Dr. Treksteer has cost me some money and much trouble, as I shall show. Shyness and timidity closed over him again, whilst I felt little inclination to exchange commonplaces in a patchwork lingo of bad Spanish and bad French respectively. The doctor was so wholly shut out from our general conversation that a fortnight passed before he seemed to understand how every other passenger had come direct from the Diamond Fields. Upon learning this fact, however, he displayed a certain curiosity and interest. He began to seek me, his interpreter, and to hang about the *fumoir* instead of smoking lonely pipes on deck. It was evident that some special motive influenced him, and I asked the question, after some days. He apologised, as usual, and resumed his solitary habits. But upon a certain afternoon, somebody proposed to make an exhibition of diamonds—and glorious was the show. From belts and boxes and gimlet-holes in squares of wood the gems were brought to view.

Each man ranged his treasure in a little pyramid before him, and even the quartermasters and the boatswain's mate came to see—each one of whom retired with a firm determination to desert on his next voyage. A display of digging operations followed, with mock sales, imitations of the chief dealers, an argument between Dutoitspan and New Rush—general foolery, in short. Dr. Treksteer was immensely interested. His wandering eyes fixed themselves and opened to their fullest. He could not examine the stones too closely: feeling them, counting their angles, weighing them in his hand, and inquiring their value. After this, it became more and more evident to me that the doctor wished to say something, and I vaguely guessed what it might be. But his timidity was not to be overcome till we had arrived within a very few days' sail of England. At length, one night, he said, while we were smoking alone on the poop: 'Are you quite sure you would know a diamond, without the possibility of mistake?' This was spoken all in one breath, after long but agitated silence.

'Perfectly certain!' I replied briskly.

Another pause of hesitation—'They're hard to distinguish at night, aren't they?'

'Quality is hard to distinguish; but any child in Griqualand could tell a diamond from another stone in the dark.'

He got up and hammered his pipe nervously on the taffrail. 'I am afraid you'll think me an old fool,' said the doctor.

'*Voyons donc!*' I answered. 'A man is a fool who does not give himself a chance! If O'Reilly, the ostrich-hunter, had not ridden into Grahamstown with that pebble which he thought curious, Griqualand would still be a desert. I take it that you have some stones which you fancy to be diamonds. Hand them out, doctor, and I promise that no one shall ever hear of it.'

He hesitated still. 'I want to tell you how I got them—'

'All right!' I said. 'But the story will be much more interesting if we know beforehand what to call these pretty things. Let us go and see them.'

With evident misgivings he took me to his cabin, and produced an old Dutch desk of mahogany bound with brass. It was full of yellow papers, dried leaves, and rubbish of that kind which feeble old bachelors collect as they potter through existence. After rummaging all over this desk a time or two, the doctor found a small leathern bag, which I had noticed at the first glance. Before opening it he made another attempt to explain the how and the why of his possessing he knew not what. But I took the bag from him, ruthlessly severed a very Gordian knot, and poured a bright little cascade of diamonds upon the upper bunk. The

doctor's excitement was pitiful; he shook all over with anxiety. But there was no need to keep the poor old fellow in suspense. 'These are the real thing,' I said at once, 'and of good water, apparently, though not large. They look like Bultfontein stones, but you have not been there. Where did you find them?'

'In the Transvaal, eight hundred miles from Bultfontein.'

This was rather startling. Everyone expected that new mines would be discovered in Griqualand; but it was a novel idea indeed that the 'diamondiferous formation' stretched so far north. I became more eager to hear this story than was Treksteer to tell it. We mounted to the poop again, and there the doctor's tale was unfolded. I warn the reader that it is no fiction I am writing. To 'make up' an adventure of the sort is so easy that I, for one, would not do it. Nor can I believe even now that my informant deceived me or himself on any point. But comment will be in place more fitting at the end.

Treksteer was a successful merchant in South America, until a revolution destroyed his stock, and the failure of some great house ruined his credit. At fifty years old he had to begin life once more, with very small resources in himself and none outside. His brother and partner returned to Holland; but he, dreading the climate, and wisely distrustful of his ability to make way amongst a hard race of men, chose to seek his fortune at the Cape. There he drifted straightway into tutorship, if one may so call the business. The Cape 'schoolmaster' is an institution of the land. Where population is so scant and so far between, regular schools could not exist. The pedagogue is a circulating creature, who rides from farm to farm, taking his pupils in such order as he can. Some boys receive an hour a week, some two, some a whole day, of his attention. In the wilder districts of the colony and the Free State a landowner must give his children the luxury of a tutor, or send them to a distance. His wife would object to the latter course if he proposed it, and people who have not means to pursue the former see their sons grow up without knowledge or manners. They do not much regret it, perhaps. A boy can ride and shoot, raise stock and sell it, without learning, and that which has never been valued is not missed. But among wealthy boers, of whom there are many in the Transvaal, the schoolmaster is an officer of the household, as one may say. Though the farmer have no children, he still keeps a pedagogue to read and write his letters, to advise him in politics and social matters, and to amuse him with stories of the world beyond the farm. The schoolmaster, in fact, is half secretary, half steward, all servant. In a few embarrassed but pregnant words, Dr. Treksteer let me understand what humiliations, drudgery,

and unkindness he had passed through in twenty years of this life. The Transvaal boer is a white Kaffir, raised above the savage in few respects, and in several beneath him. He despises the secretary, encouraging his children to do the like. But, at the same time, he flogs them with awful brutality upon complaint of idleness or bad behaviour, for he asks the full worth of his money. Blows are his resource for every trouble, and his reign is one of terror. His amusements are cards and drink, pot-hunting, and harring his black neighbours.

Once a year the boers go out for a *battue* of game, in parties of half-a-dozen or more. Each has his great waggon, and sometimes two, with slaves and riding-horses. Not many years ago it would have seemed impossible to exhaust the Transvaal hunting-grounds, but murderous driving has thinned them. The most eager sportsman could satisfy himself any day, even now, but the boer looks upon the chase as a matter of business. He counts to fill his enormous waggon with horns and hides, nor will he give himself much trouble in the doing of it. Consequently, he goes farther and farther afield every year when bent on one of these grand expeditions. The Kaffir chiefs, however, value their own game, and the sight of Dutch hunters is naturally hateful to them. Of late years they have begun to claim a tax upon each rifle, and they are certainly right in doing so. When the intruders are weak, they pay; when strong enough, they resist. Several wars have arisen upon such disputes.

In 1871 Treksteer was living with a rich boer by Leydenburg. At the proper season his master took unto him six kindred spirits for a grand *chasse*. Several 'schoolmasters' attended. They tracked up the country northwards, passed the Crokodyl and the Sushi rivers, and began their hunting on the extreme border of the *tsetse* country. A chief of the Masele Kaffirs demanded his due of a pound a gun, but failed to get it. He ordered his people to give the invaders no assistance, but they took what they wanted and shot as they pleased. Wandering just too far, however, they passed the fatal boundary, and lost a number of their oxen by 'the fly.' Bitterly vexed, they turned eastwards, recrossed the Sushi, and reached the territory of Emboonda, king of the Batsoetta Kaffirs. Here, lacking oxen and foreseeing difficulties, they thought it best to pay the game license, and to make a present besides. But their proceedings towards the people were not less oppressive. Secure in the king's permission, they wandered freely through his lands. One evening, as they rode back to the waggons, a bushman slave picked up a pebble, and examined it with delight. A boer asked him the use of it, and he explained that with such stones

his people cut their digging knives to fix a handle on them. The rumour of diamond discoveries had already spread to the Transvaal, but none of the party had seen a diamond. They knew, however, that it would bore stones, and on reaching camp this pebble was minutely scrutinised. All agreed that it looked like nothing familiar to their experience, and next day they revisited the spot. It was a marshy piece of ground; of that Dr. Treksteer is quite certain, but as to the locality he could only declare that it lay beyond the Sand river, and some two miles from the kraal of Feelipautze, a sub-chief under Emboonda. There are many lions in the neighbourhood.

A marsh is not the sort of ground in which an experienced digger would look for diamonds. But if there be one fact proved in geology by the Cape discoveries, it is that we know nothing of the conditions under which a diamond may be expected. I have not the slightest doubt that Treksteer spoke the truth, and he says that his master and slaves picked up forty-two stones that day, of the same sort as those he showed me, and that the whole party gathered over a hundred and fifty. He himself, amongst fourteen, had the largest found—about four carats, as I judged. They averaged, perhaps, rather less than two carats. Much ponderous joking there was over the matter, and many *supjes* of 'Cape Smoke,' so that when the sun grew hot all the boers went to sleep under a cameeldorn tree. A number of Kaffirs had assembled to observe these extraordinary proceedings. Through the slaves they learned what was going on, and a brawny fellow approached Treksteer, who still searched, though his eyes seemed burning in his head;—what an overpowering motive was his to keep at it! The Kaffir grinned in friendly style, and said, 'They're only little stones you find here! Look at this!'

He touched a small roll of cotton hanging on his chest—he wore nothing else besides feathers—and pushed back the end of it. Treksteer saw something which shook his whole faith in the pebbles he had so laboriously collected. For the Kaffir exposed an angle, sharp and true as instrument could cut, glassy white, and shining in the sun's rays like a star. He asked the Kaffir to unwind it wholly, but this the man refused to do, saying it was fetish, and never to be seen. His grandfather found it, and luck had followed the kraal ever since. Nothing would induce him to show, much more to part with it, but Treksteer might pass his fingers over the roll. He did so, and he declares that it was at least an inch and a half diameter; the angles seemed to be all sharp and unbroken, so that the gem must have weighed five hundred carats at the lowest estimate. Treksteer could not believe in a diamond of this size,

and sorrowfully concluded that fortune had once more betrayed him.

The boers woke up whilst this discussion proceeded, and came to the spot, yawning and stretching their huge limbs. They had felt no disappointments in life—nothing to make them distrust the Fates, especially when kind. They fell into fierce raptures over the stone—one offering a farm for it, another twelve span of oxen, a third fifty guns. This last proposal shook the Kaffir for a moment—we are telling of six years ago, when few grand chiefs owned fifty guns. But superstition outweighed cupidity, and he refused with firmness. The boers looked at one another. They had rifles and revolvers, fifty shots at least, and the Kaffirs round had only spears. Probably the man took alarm; he said, ‘What security have I for the fifty guns? You may take my fetish, and strike me dead with it. A great fetish it must be, or you would not offer so much money. Come, make me terms!’ So they all sat under the cameeldorn and argued, the schoolmasters negotiating, of course. The shrewd Kaffir proposed that one should fetch the guns, whilst the rest remained with him. But this would not do, for the envoy must carry the fetish with him to ascertain its value, and not one of the boers would trust another to return. The debate continued till afternoon, and meanwhile group after group of Kaffirs came strolling to the spot without demonstration. The whole force of the kraal assembled gradually, each man with assegais and knobkerry. The boers were too much occupied to notice, until five hundred warriors or more squatted within range of them. Then Feelipautze rose up, and good-humouredly declined to make a bargain. The boers sprang to their feet with anger, and the Kaffirs did likewise. Each party looked the other in the face for a moment, the white men surprised, the negroes firm and ready, assegais perpendicularly poised, shivering like reeds in a breath of summer wind. ‘My children have come to seek me,’ said Feelipautze; ‘now I will go with them.’ He shook hands all round, and marched across the *veldt*, his warriors behind him. A hundred yards away Feelipautze struck up his war-song in low grave tones; his followers took up the strain, and as they wound off into the distance they chanted it with the full power of their stout lungs. The boers have had reason to study each intonation of that threatening chorus, and they well understood the hint. Begun in a low key, and accompanied by no foaming dances, it meant a grave warning only, an indication that the Kaffirs stood upon their guard.

There was heated discussion in the boers’ camp that night. Some of them proposed to storm the kraal, and kill their *verdommt skellums* without more ado; but others argued that the

measure would be unjustifiable when they did not even know for certain that the fetish was a diamond. They would have to ride for it after such an act, abandoning teams, waggons, and all in them. How they would be laughed at in Pretoria if the object gained with such enormous loss should prove worthless! As for fifty guns, they could very well afford that as a speculation; but waggons and oxen and a full cargo of hides are matters much more serious. So it was resolved to visit the kraal next day, and accede to the Kaffir's terms. They would cast lots in a Bible which should take the diamond away, and the schoolmasters were set to draw a binding document which should assure all parties their rights.

Next day they called on Feelipautze. Intimate knowledge of the Kaffir customs told them at a glance that the tribe was alarmed. Cattle had vanished, and young children; whilst of fighting men scarcely one could be absent. Feelipautze, however, was all politeness and good humour. He gave them Kaffir beer to drink, and allowed everyone to see the corner of his amulet; but as for selling it, he was more than ever resolved to decline. And the boers, sobered by morning reflections, and rather startled to see the chief's fighting force, did not try to bully him. But their confidence in the diamond so much increased, that they positively offered all the rifles of the party for it, to be there and then delivered over. Such temptation was never resisted by Kaffir, and boer never proposed such an act of madness. But Feelipautze explained with frankness that he dared not part with his fetish. His own people would not allow it, and Emboonda, his suzerain, would certainly cut him into little bits for such an act of treason. Treksteer's patron, however, warmed by Kaffir beer, had an order written for fifty guns, directed it to his agent at Pretoria, and sent it by a mounted Hottentot there and then, spite of all assurances that it could do no good. But other troubles arose.

The chief possessed an otter-skin *kaross*, which hung over a cross-beam in his kraal. He possessed also a pretty daughter—a very pretty daughter, as Treksteer reports. One boer fell in love with the *kaross*, and one with the girl. Feelipautze was willing to part with either at his own price. But he asked three pounds—an ox, that is—for the *kaross*; the boer would give him no ox, and offered only two pounds in gold. Otter is the most valuable of all furs at the Cape. Excited by the previous discussion, and knowing himself to be prepared for events, the chief did not bargain with that deference thought becoming in a black man towards a boer. When two sovereigns were forced into his hand, he threw them angrily away, and one could not be found upon a search. Words grew very threatening indeed, the boer asking his sovereign or his

kaross, the Kaffirs declaring that he himself had pocketed the coin. In the midst of this row a messenger forced his way through the crush, and told Feelipautze that a little son of his was tossed by a bull. The affection of Kaffirs for their children whilst young is almost exaggerated, and the chief forgot his anger on hearing such news. He remembered only the white man's fetish in healing, and begged its help. Treksteer had been brought up to medicine, and he offered to go at once, his master raising no objection. Thereupon the party broke up, Feelipautze hurrying to the distant *kloof* where his son had met with this accident. Treksteer found the child bruised and shaken, but not hurt seriously. He stopped a day with him, however, finding several other cases that appealed to his kindly skill. Upon returning to the boers' camp he learned that the admirer of the otter-skin *kaross* had looted it in the confusion; and so proud was this hero of his feat, that he wore the trophy upon all occasions. The natives said nothing, but they looked askance.

The Hottentot had taken with him two led horses, as is the custom when undertaking a long journey. He might be expected back in a fortnight at the latest, for he would travel very quick after reaching the settlements, where his horses could be exchanged from farm to farm. The boers resolved to await his return; their waggons were loaded already, but nothing in particular called them home. Drink enough they had, and, besides, all were used to the intoxicating beverages of the Kaffir; so they prepared for a time of idle jollity, such as Treksteer dreaded above every mood of his savage patrons. I can understand that they made this nervous old man their butt, and a butt has the 'roughest' of all times in the Transvaal. Treksteer asked leave to visit his patients in the *kloof*, and his master gave him a week. The Kaffirs had not withdrawn their cattle or their families from the refuge—a sign that they did not think the danger past. The spot, of course, was naturally strong, such as boys and veterans could defend with a reasonable hope of success. But the space was not enough to feed some thousands of cattle, and very hard work it proved to keep the poor beasts alive. The boys would take out no more than a few hundreds at a time, though they howled to see their darling creatures get thinner day by day. A Kaffir loves his children, but his very soul is moved by the loss of an ox. Before the doctor's leave expired, still greater vigilance was introduced. Military order prevailed, sentries were strengthened into pickets, and the garrison slept upon its arms. So Treksteer concluded that his friends would be making a more jovial time of it than common. He himself received the kindest treatment, especially after it came out that he was not an Africander. The old chief who commanded

told him again and again not to fear, for he had healed their sick, and Kaffirs never forgot a service. My friend's experience did not quite confirm the general principle, but he felt easy in this case.

Days passed by, and Treksteer's leave came to an end. Upon the morning fixed for his return he rose before daylight, but the camp had long been astir. When the doctor left his hut, he found that all the women had retired into the *kloof* itself. Up to this time they had lived in rude shanties just outside its mouth, trusting for safety to the sentinels who stood on each hill-top between their refuge and the kraal. But the fires were all grey beneath the ashes in that grey and chilly dawn. Not a soul answered to the doctor's shout. Rough walls, interlapping, guarded the *kloof*, and the space between—through which alone entrance could be made—had been filled with thorn-bushes during the night. It would have been easy to scale the slopes on either hand, but Treksteer had seen too much of Kaffirs to attempt it. Low-lying mists hung there, and the coarse herbage was white as with frost. But through the steam and the untrodden grass fierce eyes were watching. So stealthily and noiselessly does the Kaffir begin war.

Treksteer knew what all this meant, before observing his horse tethered by the door. The old men and women did not dare to warn him unauthorised. He mounted and rode over the *veldt*. A pale fresh light spread from the east. Presently, long streamers shot across the sky, descending rapidly. The sun rose, not misty as with us, but eager, thirsty, dazzling. Its beams licked his face like fire, and threw a long blue shadow that rode with him over the dew-white grass. Unmolested the doctor went, through lands utterly unpeopled to all seeming. But he knew his lonely course was marked from eerie to eerie. Six or seven miles on the back-trail there was another *kloof* to traverse. A picket of warriors had its station there, as the doctor knew. All was still as he approached, but at the very entrance a Kaffir challenged him. He stopped dead, and presently appeared an under-chief, who turned the doctor back with kindly firmness. A young warrior accompanied him to the *kloof*. No news could be drawn from chief or subaltern, but Treksteer guessed who the enemy might be. He rode back, not unconsolated, and upon due authority the refugees received him with hearty good-will.

Three or four days passed without alarm, and then Feelipautze arrived. Preparations began at once for breaking up the camp—not too soon, for the cattle were nearly starved. The chief felt a visible embarrassment in talking with his guest. He first denied any war at all, then made solemn oath that the white men had not been concerned in it. But not in vain had Treksteer passed

twenty years in the wilderness. He laid his hand upon the Kaffir's diamond, and swore him by that great fetish. Feelipautze broke off in a rage and rode home, Treksteer following. Arrived at the kraal, he sought his friends' encampment, which had evidently been deserted for many days. No signs of fight lay around. The waggon track ran northward, and Treksteer's experience told him that the camp had been shifted leisurely, without alarm. He did not think it prudent to follow, but returned to Feelipautze and asked information. The fencing and diplomacy, not to mention the lying, on both sides, I cannot tell, but it lasted a matter of ten days, and no doubt it was most ingenious. In the end, Treksteer made a desperate resolution. He 'swore' Emboonda's life upon his vassal's fetish. No Kaffirs were present, or such treason would have cost the life of both. Feelipautze, his eyes starting, and grey with superstitious fear, asked what the doctor wanted. To recover his own effects, and no more, had Treksteer set this awful machinery in movement. And Feelipautze promised to let him have them.

This story was told me in the dark, upon the poop of the good ship 'Mersey,' homeward bound from the Cape. The doctor gave it in a language unfamiliar, without graces of style, and in tones hurried and nervous. I had lately gone through adventures of my own, and each of our comrades gambling in the saloon below could have recounted some strange experience. We were rather *blasé* with that sort of thing in the Diamond Fields. But the next chapter of the doctor's tale thrilled me. I had been impatient for its end, burning to ask more details about the situation of that marsh. But I had not expected a catastrophe so dramatic.

Treksteer and the chief went alone next day. An hour's ride brought them to a solitary hill, a *lost kop* as the boers would say. Skirting it, they came upon a little lake, surrounded by trees. Soon afterwards the waggon-track was hit, and then, suddenly, a thorn-fence rose before them. It ran betwixt trees and water. Feelipautze made a gesture, signifying, What you want lies there!—and sat upon the ground. Treksteer went on, looking for an entrance. The chief called, and gave him an axe hanging to his own waist-belt. The doctor knew then what lay inside the fence. He cut a gap. Under trees beyond he saw the big waggons standing. Advancing towards them, a vile stench filled his nostrils. Presently he kicked a skeleton in the long grass, then another. Vultures had done their work and gone. Some of the oxen lay tumbled in their tracks, some had fallen headlong in the act of galloping. Human remains here were all negro. Going on, the doctor reached a hut of sticks and branches. Here the boers lay, all seven, with the assegais still traversing their fleshless ribs.

Treksteer identified his master, pinned to the earth by a spear. Not boers only did he find, but their luckless schoolmasters, all dead and rotting. The guns of the party stood round a tree. No resistance had been made. As they sat round a fire, the Kaffirs had stolen up to them, and killed every man with one flight of assegais. Then they murdered the slaves, and even the cattle.

Amongst the bodies Treksteer recognised with shuddering disgust one not belonging to his party—a small, slight shape—a girl's. Further clue to the tragedy he never gained, but that is enough for one who knows both boer and Kaffir.

Nothing had been taken or touched in the waggons. Treksteer found his effects, packed them, and left the dreadful scene. Feelipautze sat outside the gap crooning his war-song. Before they departed he motioned Treksteer to make up the hole; and then, clutching his assegais in one hand and his fetish in the other, he led the way silently towards home. 'And so the place remains to this day!' concluded the doctor.

'Did you not give information at Pretoria?' I asked.

'Why should I bring war upon these poor creatures?' he replied. 'They had provocation enough. Besides, I have not passed through Pretoria. The same night our Hottentot returned, bringing me a letter. My brother offered me a home in Holland, and I am on my way to him.'

'They killed the Totty?'

'Of course!'

So the doctor finished. I took from him such topographical information as he could give, and obtained his promise to communicate with friends of mine in Amsterdam. He never did so. Using such clues as we had, some gentlemen joined with me in seeking Feelipautze, but without success. Emboonda we discovered easily; but no such kraal as that described. The king lost his temper on being pressed, and our messengers returned. Their belief was that Feelipautze had been murdered for the sake of his fetish. Perhaps he made a difficulty in surrendering it. No Kaffir chief, by this time, is ignorant of the value of a diamond, and Emboonda would be backed by all his tribe in declaring it treason for a vassal to possess such a king of stones.

FREDERICK BOYLE.

Madame Vigée le Brun.

THE recollections of this eminent artist, extending over a period of more than sixty years, and narrated in a style as graphic as it is unpretending, partly in the shape of letters addressed to the Princess Kourakin and partly compiled from her private diary, are not only interesting as descriptive of the state of French society before and after the Revolution, but as including among the personages referred to, as well in her own as in other countries, the most distinguished celebrities of her time. A few extracts selected from this mine of curious information may suffice to give a general idea of the work, less known with us than it deserves to be, abounding as it does in lively traits of character and amusing anecdote. Its popularity in France has never decreased since its first publication, a new and revised edition having appeared in 1869.

Elisabeth Louise Vigée was born in Paris April 16, 1755. Her father, Louis Vigée, was a painter of some talent, and her earliest instructor in the art; of her mother, whose maiden name was Jeanne Maissin, little is recorded by her daughter beyond a passing remark that she was extremely beautiful and rigidly pious. When six years old, Louise was placed in a convent, where she remained until she had attained the age of eleven. She then returned home, and continued her studies under the joint superintendence of her father and of a friend of the family, also a painter, named Davesne. Of the former she says: 'His disposition was so gay and sociable that people were attracted to his studio as much by his agreeable conversation as by his artistic talent. One day, while a rather pretty woman was sitting to him for her portrait, he observed that she was perpetually grimacing and biting her lips in order to make her mouth appear smaller. "Do not distress yourself, madame," he coolly remarked; "if it gives you the slightest pleasure, we will leave out the mouth altogether."' Every evening he was in the habit of receiving at his house a certain number of intimates, among whom were the painter Doyen and the dramatist Poinsinet. The latter was the most credulous of human beings,¹ and it was therefore difficult to resist the temptation of

¹ Excepting, perhaps, Chapelle, a well-known actor of the Vaudeville, who, on being assured by one of his comrades that he had succeeded in taming a carp so perfectly that it used to follow him about like a dog, but that he had unfortunately lost

mystifying him. Once, for instance, he was made to believe that there existed an office in the royal household called the King's Screen, and that, in order to qualify himself for it, it was necessary that he should submit to be placed in front of a blazing fire; to which Poinciset consented, but, soon finding the heat insupportable, essayed to change his position. 'Stay where you are,' cried his tormentor; 'if you are unable to endure a little scorching, what possible use can there be in your applying for the post?'

In 1768, M. Vigée died, leaving his family totally unprovided for, and entirely dependent for subsistence on the talent of our heroine, whose rapid progress in her art was already the subject of general astonishment. One of her warmest appreciators was Joseph Vernet, who earnestly recommended her, as the only way of avoiding mannerism, to paint exclusively from nature. Notwithstanding her industry, however, and the patronage accorded to her rising reputation, her earnings were not sufficient to defray the expenses of the household; nor did her mother's subsequent marriage with a rich jeweller much improve the state of things, the new head of the establishment proving so sordidly avaricious as to deny his wife and step-daughter the common necessities of life: 'I being foolish enough,' says the latter, 'to let him have my money as fast as I got it.' This amiable personage, moreover, whose name was Le Sèvre, insisted on appropriating to his own use the wardrobe of his predecessor; 'and, as he refused to go to the expense of a single alteration, you may imagine,' continues poor Louise, 'what we felt with such a tragically-accoutred figure constantly before our eyes.'

Among other portraits painted at this period by Mdle. Vigée, were those of Count Schouvaloff, the courtly chamberlain of the Empress Catherine, and Madame Denis, the favourite niece of Voltaire. Her studio was constantly crowded with visitors, including the gigantic Count Orloff, one of the assassins of Peter III.; and the celebrated Madame Geoffrin, one of the last heads of literary *salons* in France, who complimented her on her talent and good looks; 'for,' candidly admits the writer, 'I was then considered extremely pretty.' Madame Geoffrin, though little over seventy, appeared to the youthful artist to be a hundred years old. 'She was bent nearly double, and her attire made her look still more aged: she wore an iron grey dress, and on her head a cap, over which was a hood of lace, tied in a bow underneath her

it, gravely asked him: 'How did that happen?' 'Why,' replied the other, 'one evening I took it to my dressing-room at the theatre. As I was going home after the performance, a storm came on, and my poor carp, trying to jump across a gutter, fell in and was drowned.' 'How very unlucky!' said Chapelle. 'I always thought a carp could swim like a fish!'

chin.' The number of applicants for sittings now increased daily; and, as several of them were young men about the Court whose principal object in coming was to admire the painter, she adopted the following ingenious method of baffling them: 'Whenever I perceived an inclination on their part to be more tender than the occasion warranted, I placed them in such a position that it was impossible for them to look me in the face; and, if I caught a glance straying in my direction, I immediately called out, "J'en suis aux yeux;" which, if it annoyed them, infinitely amused my mother, who was invariably present. One of those I treated in this manner was the Marquis de Choiseul.'

By way of relaxation, Mdlle. Vigée frequently indulged in a stroll on her favourite promenade, the Boulevard du Temple, one side of which was regularly occupied by 'a long line of old ladies inhabiting the *marais*, gravely seated on a row of chairs, their cheeks so covered with rouge that they looked like dolls. A friend of mine, who was acquainted with most of them, told us that when at home they did nothing but play at *loto* from morning till night; and that one day when he was asked the latest news at Versailles, from whence he had just returned, and informed them of the approaching departure of M. de la Pérouse on his voyage of discovery, the lady of the house exclaimed: 'That gentleman must have plenty of spare time on his hands!'

The portraits of La Bruyère and Cardinal Fleury, painted after engravings of the period, and offered by the artist to the French Academy, procured her a visit from its secretary D'Alembert, 'a little man, cold and reserved in manner, but exquisitely polite,' commissioned to inform her that she was henceforth entitled to admission on the occasion of every public assembly of that body. 'He had just left the room, when a lady, who had been present at the interview, inquired whether I had painted the portraits we were talking about after nature? I could hardly help laughing as I replied that I was rather too young for that; nevertheless, I was heartily glad that the academician had not heard her.'

The marriage of Mdlle. Vigée with the painter Jeanne Baptiste le Brun, which took place January 11, 1776, was ultimately, in a financial point of view, a source of serious embarrassment to our heroine, her husband being not only a spendthrift but an inveterate gambler, who, after having dissipated his own fortune, squandered in the course of a few years the entire capital, amounting to upwards of a million of francs, which his wife had imprudently placed at his disposal; so that, according to Madame le Brun's statement, when she quitted France in 1789, beyond the inconsiderable sum of ready money she took with her, she had literally not a farthing

left. Shortly after the wedding she attended a sitting of the Academy, and became, greatly to her surprise, the object of a general ovation, in consequence of the reading by La Harpe of his discourse in verse on female talent. When he came to the lines,

Le Brun, de la beauté le peintre et le modèle,
Moderne Rosalba, mais plus brillante qu'elle,
Joint la voix de Favart au souris de Vénus,

he glanced expressively in her direction; upon which the whole assembly, including the Duchesse de Chartres and the King of Sweden, rose from their seats, and, turning towards her, applauded her so vehemently as to overwhelm her with confusion.

One of her portraits dating from this period was that of the Duchesse de Mazarin, of whom she relates the following anecdote: 'It was said of her that at her birth three fairies had endowed her in different ways: the first giving her beauty, the second riches, and the third ill-luck. She certainly was most unfortunate in everything she undertook, some untoward accident invariably happening to her. One evening she had invited a party of sixty people to supper, and among the dishes placed on the table was a huge pie filled with a number of live birds—an invention of her own. On its being opened, the released captives, attracted by the jewelled head-dresses of the ladies, took refuge in the luxuriant tresses, and, by completely destroying the piled-up handiwork of the *coiffeur*, caused a universal *sauve qui peut*, and brought the entertainment to an untimely end. This favourite of the fairies was still handsome, but so enormously stout as to excite in an unusual degree the admiration of the Turkish ambassador, who, on being asked during a performance at the opera to point out the most beautiful woman in the theatre, unhesitatingly designated the Duchesse de Mazarin, "parce qu'elle était la plus grosse."

In 1779, Madame le Brun was summoned to Versailles by order of the Queen, of whose personal appearance she gives a minute description. 'Marie Antoinette was tall and admirably proportioned; her arms were magnificent, and her hands and feet small and exquisitely shaped. No woman in France could walk as she did; not one displayed so perfect a combination of majesty and grace. Her features were not regular; she had the long and narrow oval peculiar to her family and to the Austrian race, with small blue eyes, a delicately chiselled nose, and not too large a mouth, though the lips were somewhat thick. The most striking characteristic of her face was its brilliant complexion; her skin was so transparent that I never succeeded in imitating it to my satisfaction, for, whatever colours I employed, it was impossible adequately to render its

dazzling fairness.' The first portrait painted by Madame le Brun represents the Queen in a satin dress with a large hoop, holding a rose in her hand ; this was destined as a present to her brother the Emperor Joseph, and was followed by several others. The artist was then near her confinement; and one day, in her anxiety not to keep her illustrious model waiting, happened to let fall her box of colours, so that all its contents were scattered on the floor. As she was bending forward to recover them, Marie Antoinette checked her, saying that stooping might be prejudicial to her in her condition, and picked up every article herself. 'It would be difficult,' continues Madame le Brun, 'to describe the winning charm of her manner; I never remember her omitting to say something pleasant to those who approached her, and her kindness to myself personally I am not likely to forget.' The Queen's last sitting was for the picture in which she is shown surrounded by her children, and which was exhibited in 1788; it was afterwards removed to Versailles, and Madame le Brun was presented on that occasion to Louis XVI. 'I am no judge of painting,' he said to her; 'but you, madame, have made me admire it.' This work was succeeded by the portraits of most of the royal family, and by that of the unfortunate Princesse de Lamballe. 'Without being pretty,' observes our author, 'she appeared so at a certain distance; she had small features, a fresh complexion, and an abundance of fair hair, and was altogether remarkable for her elegance and grace.'

During a journey through Flanders made by Madame le Brun with her husband in 1782, she was so struck with the beauty of Rubens's famous 'Chapeau de Paille,' that she painted her own portrait in a similar style, wearing a straw hat and holding a palette in her hand; this picture, subsequently engraved by Müller, is considered one of her masterpieces. On her return she was elected a member of the Academy of Painting; and so firmly established by this time was her artistic reputation, that her little apartment in the Rue Cléry was constantly frequented not only by the leading members of the aristocracy, but by the most distinguished of her literary and musical contemporaries. Among these were Sacchini, Grétry, Garat, Viotti, and Madame Todi, Boufflers, and the Abbé Delille. Concerts and dramatic performances were successively organised by the hostess, the best actor in the latter being her brother Louis Vigée, and the worst, strange to say, the future Roscius of the French stage, Talma.

An interesting chapter in these Recollections is devoted to a notice of the principal theatrical celebrities of the period, from Lekain and Prévile to Mdle. Contat and Mdle. Mars. In her account of the opera, Madame le Brun mentions the dancers,

Gardel and Vestris, executing a *chaconne* with the graceful, but singularly thin, Mdle. Guimard, and chasing her across the stage, thereby suggesting the idea of two dogs quarrelling for a bone. Speaking of Vestris the younger, she records a saying of his father while watching his extraordinary feats of agility. 'If my son does not spring higher,' he gravely remarked, 'it is because he is unwilling to humiliate his comrades too much; for were he to mount as high as he could, he would be *ennuyé* in the air for want of conversation.' She also alludes to the performances at the Comte de Vaudreuil's private theatre at Gennevilliers, the last of which consisted of the 'Mariage de Figaro,' played by the actors of the Comédie Française, the Comte d'Artois (afterwards Charles Dix) being among the audience. 'Beaumarchais,' she says, 'must have had some difficulty in persuading M. de Vaudreuil to consent to its production, this satire being notoriously directed against the Court, several members of which, including a prince of the blood royal, were present; and the Count had ultimately reason to repent of his condescension, for, some weeks later, the dramatist solicited an interview with him at Versailles, and laid before him a financial scheme of his invention, offering him a considerable sum of money if he would cause it to be adopted. 'Monsieur Beaumarchais,' coolly replied M. de Vaudreuil, 'you have timed your visit well, for I have passed a good night, and am in excellent humour. If you had ventured to make me this proposal yesterday, I should most certainly have thrown you out of the window!'

In 1786, Madame le Brun saw for the first time Madame Dubarry, then residing in her *château* at Louveciennes, and added three portraits of the once celebrated favourite to the catalogue of her works. 'She might have been about forty-five years old; she was tall, but not disproportionately so, and inclined to *embon-point*; her face was still charming, and she wore her fair hair in curls like a child, but her complexion had lost its brilliancy. . . . She lived very retired, the only ladies composing her usual society being the ambassadress of Portugal, Madame de Souza, and the Marquise de Brunoy.'

In the autumn of 1789, the writer of these Recollections, alarmed by the rapid progress of the Revolution, and by no means reassured as to her own personal safety and that of her little daughter, determined on quitting France, and realising a project she had long entertained of visiting Italy. Having succeeded in obtaining a passport, she began her journey on October 5, a few hours after the entrance into the capital of the King and Queen from Versailles; her companions in the *diligence* being a Jacobin

from Grenoble, and an individual of repulsive aspect whom she soon ascertained from his conversation to be a common thief. 'Luckily,' says Madame le Brun, 'he saw nothing in our appearance of a nature to tempt his cupidity; indeed, all I took with me was a little linen and eighty louis in gold, having left everything else I had in the world in my husband's hands. I need hardly add that I never saw a *sou* of it again.' On her arrival at Lyons, she remained for three days, to recruit her strength, at the house of a family she had formerly known in Paris, and engaged a *voiturier* to convey her across the frontier as far as Turin, where she was cordially welcomed by the celebrated Porporati, who at once placed his modest dwelling at her disposal. In reply to her question whether the city contained any munificent patrons of art, he shook his head negatively. 'The best proof I can give you,' he said, 'that they know nothing about it, is that one of the highest personages in Turin, hearing that I was an engraver, came to me, not long ago, requesting me to engrave his crest on a seal.'

After a short halt at Parma and Modena, Madame le Brun continued her route to Bologna, and passed several days in examining the public and private galleries. In one of the latter, the *custode*, surprised beyond measure at the visitor's artistic appreciation of the pictures and intimate acquaintance with the names of the painters, asked her servant who she was, adding: 'I have shown and explained the collection to many noble ladies, but this one knows it better than I do!' While at Bologna, she received her diploma as member of the Academy of that city, presented to her by the director in person; and after a week's sojourn resumed her journey through Florence to Rome, where she arrived towards the end of November. Her first visit was to Angelica Kaufmann, 'whose acquaintance I was especially anxious to make. She is about fifty years old, and extremely delicate, her health having greatly suffered owing to her former unfortunate marriage with an adventurer, whose prodigality completely ruined her. Her present husband is an architect, who acts as her man of business. Her conversation is most instructive, but without a spark of enthusiasm. I dined with her at our ambassador's, Cardinal de Bernis, who placed us on either side of him. He had invited about thirty guests to meet us, and entertained us magnificently, although he himself ate nothing but vegetables. But now comes the amusing part of the story. At seven o'clock next morning I was awoke by the announcement that "the family of the Cardinal Bernis" were waiting to see me. I dressed myself as quickly as I could, not a little embarrassed, as you may imagine, and gave orders that "the family" should be admitted; when in walked five

strapping lackeys in livery, who, according to a custom of which I was then totally ignorant, respectfully solicited a "buona mano"!

In July, 1790, Madame le Brun and her daughter started for Naples, and took up their quarters on the Chiaja. Immediately on her arrival, she received a visit from Sir William Hamilton, the English ambassador, who requested her, as a special favour, to undertake the portrait of Miss Harte, whom he afterwards married. 'I painted her as a Bacchante, reposing on the seashore, and holding a goblet in her hand; her expressive countenance and the profusion of beautiful hair which almost covered her whole person, made an admirable picture. Sir William, however, though he ostensibly destined this portrait for his own collection, and after much bargaining only paid me a hundred louis for it, ultimately sold it in London for three hundred guineas; which caused M. de Talleyrand, the son of our ambassador at Naples, to remark, when he heard the Chevalier Hamilton spoken of as a benefactor of the arts: "Say rather that the arts benefit him." Twelve years later,' continues the writer, 'Lady Hamilton came to see me in London; she had just lost her husband, and was in deep mourning and enormously fat. She told me that she was much to be pitied, and that nothing could console her for the loss of so invaluable a friend; a moment after, she was sitting at my piano, and singing as if she had forgotten all about him.' Among the portraits painted by Madame le Brun at Naples, were those of the Queen, sister of Marie Antoinette, and the celebrated composer Paisiello, then at the summit of his reputation. This latter work, one of the artist's masterpieces, is now in the gallery of the Louvre.

It is impossible, consistently with our limits, to follow the author of these Recollections step by step, subsequent to her final departure from Rome in April, 1792. Her intention, after visiting Venice, Verona, and Milan, a tour of several months, was to return to France by way of Turin; but on arriving there she found the city thronged with emigrants, most of them in a state of utter destitution, and bringing the news of the capture of the Tuileries on August 10. Among them was her old friend M. de Rivière, *chargé d'affaires* from the Court of Saxony, whose daughter had married her brother, Louis Vigée, some years before. He informed her that her husband was living unmolested in Paris, and that her mother and the young couple were also in safety, but earnestly besought her to abandon all idea of prosecuting her journey. Under these circumstances, she decided on gratifying a wish she had long entertained of visiting Vienna and St. Petersburg; and, bidding with regret a last adieu to Italy, proceeded

through the Tyrol to the Austrian capital, where she remained upwards of two years. The great statesman, Prince de Kaunitz, to whom she brought a letter of introduction, received her with marked courtesy, and she was at all times a welcome guest at his table; she had also the pleasure of renewing her acquaintance with the amiable and accomplished Prince de Ligne, by whom she was introduced to the best society in Vienna. Her studio was the resort of the most distinguished members of the aristocracy, native and foreign, including her own compatriots the Duchesse de Guiche, and the Polignac family; and during her stay, the number of portraits painted by her exceeded fifty.

In April, 1795, she again set out on her travels, and after a careful inspection of the Dresden gallery, which she considered the finest in Europe, and a brief sojourn at Berlin, reached St. Petersburg towards the end of July. She was scarcely installed in her hotel, when a message from the French ambassador, Count Esterhazy, informed her that the Empress Catherine would receive her on the following day at her palace of Czarskoeselo, and that he himself would escort her thither. 'The sight of this celebrated woman,' she says, 'produced so powerful an impression on me that I almost forgot in whose presence I stood. Though I was at first greatly surprised to find her so much shorter and stouter than I had imagined her to be, her face was still handsome, her forehead high, and her nose perfectly Grecian; the expression of her eyes was peculiarly soft, and her physiognomy remarkable for its animation and vivacity.' By the Empress's command Madame le Brun undertook shortly after her arrival the portraits of the Grand Duchesses Alexandrine, Helena, and Elizabeth, the latter of whom had recently become the wife of Alexander. She had, indeed, no cause to complain of want of patronage; specimens of her talent being so generally desired, that her time was fully occupied in supplying them.

The death of Catherine in 1796 and the accession of Paul III. are circumstantially recorded in her Recollections, and with reference to the latter sovereign she relates the following anecdote: 'The slightest infraction of his orders was punished by banishment to Siberia, or at the very least by imprisonment; and such was the singularity of his character, that his transitions from the wildest ferocity to extreme indulgence succeeded each other according to the caprice of the moment, and so rapidly that no one felt himself safe when in his presence. One evening I was invited to a ball at Court, in the course of which a young man, hastily entering the dancing-room, pushed rudely by a lady, who in her alarm uttered a loud shriek. The Emperor, hearing this, turned

to one of his aides-de-camp, and, without inquiring into the matter, bade him conduct the gentleman to the fortress, and bring him word of his safe incarceration. The aide-de-camp soon returned announcing that the order had been executed, but added that the prisoner was extremely short-sighted, and, in proof of the assertion, handed over a pair of spectacles he had taken from him. Paul, after carefully examining them, exclaimed in a tone of great excitement: "Let him be instantly released, and taken to his own house. I shall not retire to rest until I know that he is at home again." He was excessively ugly; his flat nose, large mouth, and long teeth made him resemble a death's head, and gave rise to an infinity of caricatures, the best of which represented him holding a paper in each hand; on one was written *ordre*, on the other *contre-ordre*, and on his forehead *désordre*.'

While at Moscow in March, 1801, Madame le Brun received the intelligence of the murder of this unfortunate monarch, and returned to St. Petersburg in time to witness the accession of Alexander. Her stay, however, in Russia, after a residence of upwards of six years, was drawing to a close, partly owing to her failing health, which rendered a change of climate necessary, and partly to the marriage of her daughter with a certain Nigris, secretary to Count Czernicheff, of which she entirely disapproved. In July, 1801, we find her at Berlin, enjoying the society of Queen Louise of Prussia, who appears to have produced on our traveller the same favourable impression that she did on all who came in contact with her. 'The charm of her countenance, so expressive of goodness and amiability, the exquisite perfection of her figure, and the dazzling freshness of her complexion combined to form the most bewitching *ensemble*. Those alone who have seen her can understand what I felt on beholding her for the first time.' While at Berlin, Madame le Brun was invited to dinner by the Princess Galitzin, her neighbour at table being General Duroc, of whom she pithily says: 'I was told that he was an intimate friend of Bonaparte; but he never addressed a word to me, nor I to him.'

At length, after an absence of twelve years, she returned to Paris, and found her husband and brother awaiting her arrival at the house in the Rue du Gros-Chenet, belonging to Le Brun; and, before many days had elapsed, her *salon* was thronged with visitors, including Joséphine, whom she had formerly known as Mdlle. Tascher de la Pagerie, and who now presented herself as the wife of Bonaparte. The sympathies, however, of Madame le Brun were too exclusively Royalist to admit of any great intimacy between her and the *ci-devant* Madame de Beauharnais, the only

result of their renewed acquaintance being a visit from Lucien to her studio; nor does it appear that she was ever personally introduced to the First Consul. She speaks in rapturous terms of the beauty of Madame Récamier, and of her fascinating rival Madame Tallien, and owns, with reference to the latter, that she was unable to discover a single defect either in her face or her figure. She also alludes to an evening pleasantly passed at Madame Campan's educational establishment at St. Germain, on which occasion Racine's 'Esther' was performed by that lady's pupils, Bonaparte himself being among the company. 'I could hardly believe my eyes,' she says, 'when the little, thin man was pointed out to me; having formed as incorrect an idea of his personal appearance as I had previously done with regard to that of the Empress Catherine.' When her old friend the Princess Dolgorouki was presented at the Tuileries, Madame le Brun inquired, on her return, what impression the First Consul's Court had made upon her. 'Ce n'est pas une cour,' replied the Princess; 'c'est une puissance.' 'During my subsequent stay in London,' continues the narrator, 'I dined with the Duchess of Gordon, one of Bonaparte's most enthusiastic admirers. She showed me his portrait, and said very emphatically, 'Voilà mon héros!' or rather, according to her own peculiar pronunciation, 'mon Zéro!'

This visit of Madame le Brun to England occurred in 1802, and, contrary to her original idea, she remained there nearly three years, taking up her quarters in Maddox Street. She soon became intimate with most of the celebrities of the time, including Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire, whom she describes as follows: 'She might have been then about forty-five years of age; her features were extremely regular, but I was by no means struck with her beauty, her complexion having lost its brilliancy, and the general effect of her otherwise pleasing countenance being marred by an incipient blindness.' During her stay in London she gave several concerts, at which Viotti played, and Madame Grassini and Mrs. Billington sang. At one of these, George IV., then Prince of Wales, was present, and was so delighted with his hostess that he said to her: 'I usually pass my evenings in going from party to party, but when I am with you I stay.' *Apropos* of the above-mentioned vocalists, our author says: 'Madame Grassini had a contralto voice, and Mrs. Billington a soprano, and nothing pleased them more than to imitate each other; a *tour de force* which in my opinion suited neither. One night they were performing together in the same opera, and Madame Grassini had just attempted a high note, when the manager came into my box in a terrible fury. 'You heard that!' he cried; 'well, what can I

do with such women? When they rehearse in the morning, Mrs. Billington persists in adopting a low key, and Madame Grassini a high one; between them they will drive me mad!"

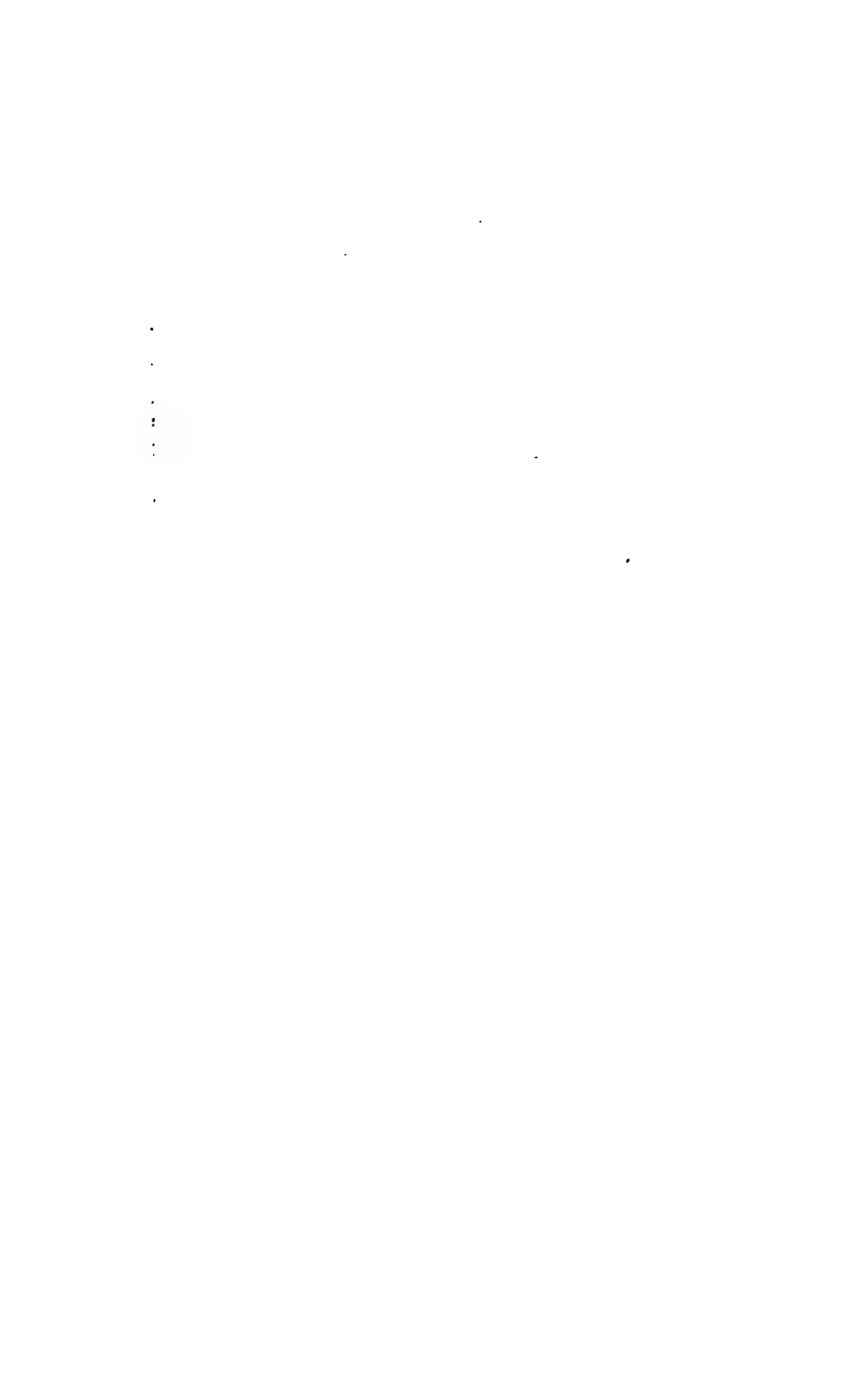
Of Mrs. Siddons Madame le Brun speaks most enthusiastically, comparing her 'enchanting voice' with that of Mdlle. Mars; she was also much interested by a visit to the studio of Benjamin West. Talking of Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose 'Infant Samuel' she greatly admired, she says: 'I was told that when my portrait of M. de Calonne arrived in London, he went to see it, and praised it highly; upon which one of those present remarked that the portrait ought to be first rate, for it had cost 80,000 francs. "Well," replied Reynolds, "all I can say is that if I were offered 100,000, I could not paint one like it."'

Before leaving England, she visited not only the principal environs of London, but also Stowe, Warwick Castle, and Blenheim, and was everywhere most cordially received; she appears, indeed, to have been greatly touched by the kindness and hospitality she had met with on all sides during her sojourn, as well as by the liberality with which her artistic efforts had been recompensed. Returning to Paris by way of Holland, direct communication with France having been closed since the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, she found an Emperor where she had left a First Consul, and was soon after informed that he was much displeased at her prolonged absence; however, he ultimately so far relented as to commission her to undertake the portrait of his sister Madame Murat. 'I did not venture to refuse,' she says, 'although the price offered me was less than half what I was accustomed to receive.' This task seems to have been no sinecure, the sitter being extremely capricious, and varying her style of dress and *coiffure* so frequently that the unfortunate artist was perpetually engaged in effacing and altering what she had done the day before. At last she could bear it no longer; and on one occasion, when her model had tried her patience more than usual, she turned to M. Denon, who happened to be present, and remarked, loud enough for Madame Murat to hear, that, 'though many *real* princesses had sat to her for their portraits, she had never been similarly tormented before!'

In 1808, Madame le Brun started on a tour through Switzerland, a full description of which is given in her letters to the Countess Potocka; and on her return to France she purchased a villa at Louveciennes, not far from the ancient abode of Madame Dubarry. There and in Paris she henceforth alternately resided, enjoying the society of her daughter, Madame Nigris, who had left Russia (and her husband) in order to rejoin her, and of her brother's family. She witnessed the events of 1814, the Hundred Days, and

THE FIRE BRIGADE.





the restoration of the Bourbons, and continued her professional labours for several years with unwearied assiduity. A widow since 1813, she was destined to survive both her daughter and her brother, the former of whom died in 1819, and the latter in 1820. From that period she lived comparatively in retirement, tended with affectionate solicitude by her two nieces, and breathed her last May 29, 1842, at the good old age of eighty-seven.

The works of this celebrated artist, any detailed notice of which would be out of place here, consist of six hundred and sixty portraits; fifteen paintings of various kinds, of which the 'Sybil' is perhaps the best known; and nearly two hundred landscapes: forming a total of upwards of eight hundred and seventy pictures. After her death, two of her happiest efforts were presented by her nieces to the gallery of the Louvre; namely, her own portrait with her daughter in her arms, and 'La Jeune Fille au Manchon.'

The Fire-Brigade.

FIRE!—There's a cry in the crowded street,
There's a crimson light in the sky,
A shout of men, a tramp of feet,
A roll of wheels, as, straight and fleet,
The Fire-Brigade flies by.

Fire!—Clear the way!—In generous strife
Race on: the flames rise higher;
No hope within, where smoke is rife,
And children there who gasp for life:
The house is ringed with fire.

Help!—Hear again that despairing cry,
As the fierce ruby flames gleam bright
On brazen helmets, mounting high,
The ladders placed the windows nigh,
Where women swoon with fright.

Hush!—See where the hissing engines play
On the tottering fire-flaked wall;
They gain the sill and force their way
To where the frightened children lay,
With roof about to fall.

Saved!—and at last, in the fresh cool air,
The women and children are laid;
And shouts ring out for those who dare
To face such hell of smoke and glare,—
The gallant Fire-Brigade.

Some Random Notes of an Idle Excursion.

BY MARK TWAIN.

I.

ALL the journeyings I had ever done had been purely in the way of business. The pleasant May weather suggested a novelty, namely, a trip for pure recreation, the bread-and-butter element left out. The reverend said he would go, too: a good man; one of the best of men, although a clergyman. By eleven at night we were in New Haven and on board the New York boat. We bought our tickets, and then went wandering around, here and there, in the solid comfort of being free, idle, and putting distance between ourselves and the mails and telegraphs.

After a while I went to my state-room and undressed, but the night was too enticing for bed. We were moving down the bay now, and it was pleasant to stand at the window and take the cool night-breeze and watch the gliding lights on shore. Presently, two elderly men sat down under that window, and began a conversation. Their talk was properly no business of mine, and yet I was feeling friendly toward the world and willing to be entertained. I soon gathered that they were brothers, that they were from a small Connecticut village, and that the matter in hand concerned the cemetery. Said one:

'Now, John, we talked it all over amongst ourselves, and this is what we've done. You see everybody was a movin' from the old buryin' ground, and our folks was most about left to themselves, as you may say. They was crowded, too, as you know,—lot wasn't big enough in the first place; and last year when Seth's wife died we couldn't hardly tuck her in. She sort o' overlaid Deacon Shorb's lot, and he soured on her, so to speak, and on the rest of us, too. So we talked it over, and I was for a lay-out in the new simitery on the hill. They wa'n't unwilling, if it was cheap. Well, the two best and biggest plots was No. 8 and No. 9. Both of a size; nice, comfortable room for twenty-six,—twenty-six full-growns, that is,—but you reckon in children and other shorts, and strike an everage, and I should say you might lay in thirty, or may be thirty-two or three, pretty genteel, no crowdin' to signify.'

'That's a plenty, William. Which one did you buy?'

'Well, I'm coming to that, John. You see No. 8 was thirteen dollars, No. 9 fourteen——'

'I see. So's 't you took No. 8.'

'You wait. I took No. 9. And I'll tell you for why. In the first place Deacon Shorb wanted it. Well, after the way he'd gone on about Seth's wife overlappin' his prem'ses, I'd a beat him out of that No. 9 if I'd a had to stand two dollars extra, let alone one. That's the way I felt about it. Says I, what's a dollar any way? Life's on'y a pilgrimage, says I; we ain't here for good, and we can't take it with us, says I. So I just dumped it down, knowin' the Lord don't suffer a good deed to go for nothin', and callatin' to take it out o' somebody in the course o' trade. Then there was another reason, John. No. 9's a long way the handyest lay-out in the simetery, and the likeliest for situation. It lays right on top of a knoll, in the dead centre of the buryin' grohnd; and you can see Millport from there, and Tracy's, and Hopper Mount, and a raft o' farms, and so on. There ain't no better outlook from a buryin' plot in the State. Si Higgins says so, and I reckon he ought to know. Well, and that ain't all. Course Shorb had to take No. 8; wa'n't no help for 't. Now, No. 8 jines on to No. 9, but it's on the slope of the hill, and every time it rains it'll soak right down on to the Shorbs. Si Higgins says 't when the deacon's time comes, he better take out fire and marine insurance both, on his remains.'

Here was sound of a low, placid, duplicate chuckle of appreciation and satisfaction.

'Now, John, here's a little rough draft of the ground that I've made on a piece of paper. Up here in the left hand corner we've bunched the departed; took them from the old graveyard and stowed them one alongside o' t'other, on a first-come-first-served plan, no partialities, with gran'ther Jones for a starter, on'y because it happened so, and windin' up indiscriminate with Seth's twins. A little crowded towards the end of the lay-out, may be; but we reckoned 't wa'n't best to scatter the twins. Well, next comes the livin'. Here, where it's marked A, we're goin' to put Mariar and her family when they're called; B, that's for brother Hosea and hisn; C, Calvin and tribe. What's left is these two lots here,—just the gem of the whole patch for general style and outlook,—they're for me and my folks, and you and yourn. Which of them would you ruther be buried in?'

'I swan you've took me mighty unexpected, William! It sort of started the shivers. Fact is, I was thinkin' so busy about makin' things comfortable for the others, I hadn't thought about being buried myself.'

'Life's on'y a fleetin' show, John, as the sayin' is. We've all got to go, sooner or later. To go with a clean record's the main thing. Fact is, it's the on'y thing worth strivin' for, John.'

‘Yes, that’s so, William, that’s so; there ain’t no getting around it. Which of these lots would you recommend?’

‘Well, it depends, John. Are you particular about outlook?’

‘I don’t say I am, William; I don’t say I ain’t. Reely, I don’t know. But mainly, I reckon, I’d set store by a south exposure.’

‘That’s easy fixed, John. They’re both south exposure. They take the sun and the Shorbs’s get the shade.’

‘How about sile, William?’

‘D’s a sandy sile, E’s mostly loom.’

‘You may gimme E, then, William; a sandy sile caves in, more or less, and costs for repairs.’

‘All right; set your name down here, John, under E. Now, if you don’t mind payin’ me your share of the fourteen dollars, John, while we’re on the business, everything’s fixed.’

After some higgling and sharp bargaining the money was paid, and John bade his brother good-night and took his leave. There was silence for some moments; then a soft chuckle welled up from the lonely William, and he muttered: ‘I declare for ’t, if I haven’t made a mistake! It’s D that’s mostly loom, not E. And John’s booked for a sandy sile after all.’

There was another soft chuckle, and William departed to his rest, also.

The next day, in New York, was a hot one. Still we managed to get more or less entertainment out of it. Toward the middle of the afternoon we arrived on board the staunch steamship ‘Bermuda,’ with bag and baggage, and hunted for a shady place. It was blazing summer weather, until we were half way down the harbour. Then I buttoned my coat closely; half an hour later I put on a spring overcoat and buttoned that. As we passed the light-ship I added an ulster and tied a handkerchief around the collar to hold it snug to my neck. So rapidly had the summer gone and winter come again.

By nightfall we were far out at sea, with no land in sight. No telegrams could come here, no letters, no news. This was an uplifting thought. It was still more uplifting to reflect that the millions of harassed people on shore behind us were suffering just as usual.

The next day brought us into the midst of the Atlantic solitudes,—out of smoke-coloured soundings into fathomless deep blue; no ships visible anywhere over the wide ocean; no company but Mother Cary’s chickens wheeling, darting, skimming the waves in the sun. There were some seafaring men among the passengers, and conversation drifted into matters concerning ships and sailors. One said that ‘true as the needle to the pole’ was a

bad figure, since the needle seldom pointed to the pole. He said a ship's compass was not faithful to any particular point, but was the most fickle and treacherous of the servants of man. It was for ever changing. It changed every day in the year; consequently, the amount of the daily variation had to be ciphered out and allowance made for it, else the mariner would go utterly astray. Another said there was a vast fortune waiting for the genius who should invent a compass that would not be affected by the local influences of an iron ship. He said there was only one creature more fickle than a wooden ship's compass, and that was the compass of an iron ship. Then came reference to the well-known fact that an experienced mariner can look at the compass of a new iron vessel, thousands of miles from her birthplace, and tell which way her head was pointing when she was in process of building.

Now an ancient whale-ship master fell to talking about the sort of crews they used to have in his early days. Said he:

‘Sometimes we'd have a batch of college students. Queer lot. Ignorant? Why, they didn't know the cat-heads from the main brace. But if you took them for fools you'd get bit, sure. They'd learn more in a month than another man would in a year. We had one, once, in the “Mary Ann,” that came aboard with gold spectacles on. And besides he was rigged out from main truck to keelson in the nobbiest clothes that ever saw a fo'castle. He had a chest full, too: cloaks, and broadcloth coats, and velvet vests; everything swell, you know; and didn't the salt water fix them out for him? I reckon not! Well, going to sea, the mate told him to go aloft and help shake out the fore-to'gallants'l. Up he shins to the foretop, with his spectacles on, and in a minute down he comes again, looking insulted. Says the mate, “What did you come down for?” Says the chap, “P'raps you didn't notice there ain't any ladders above there.” You see we hadn't any shrouds above the foretop. The men bursted out in a laugh such as I reckon you never heard the like of. Next night, which was dark and rainy, the mate ordered this chap to go aloft about something, and I'm d—d if he didn't start up with an umbrella and a lantern! But no matter; he made a mighty good sailor before the voyage was done, and we had to hunt up something else to laugh at. Years afterwards, when I had forgot all about him, I comes into Boston, mate of a ship, and was loafing around town with the second mate, and it so happened that we stepped into the Revere House, thinking may be we would chance the salt-horse in that big dining-room for a flyer, as the boys say. Some fellows were talking just at our elbow, and one says, “Yonder's the new governor of Massachusetts,—at the table over there, with

the ladies." We took a good look, my mate and I, for we hadn't either of us ever seen a governor before. I looked and looked at that face, and then all of a sudden it popped on me! But I didn't give any sign. Says I, "Mate, I've a notion to go over and shake hands with him." Says he, "I think I see you doing it, Tom." Says I, "Mate, I'm a-going to do it." Says he, "Oh, yes, I reckon! May be you don't want to bet you will, Tom?" Says I, "I don't mind going a V on it, mate." Says he, "Put it up." "Up she goes," says I, planking the cash. This surprised him. But he covered it, and says, pretty sarcastic, "Hadh't you better take your grub with the governor and the ladies, Tom?" Says I, "Upon second thoughts, I will." Says he, "Well, Tom, you *are* a dum fool." Says I, "May be I am, may be I ain't; but the main question is, Do you want to risk two and a half that I won't do it?" "Make it a V," says he. "Done," says I. I started, him a-giggling and slapping his hand on his thigh, he felt so good. I went over there and leaned my knuckles on the table a minute and looked the governor in the face, and says I, "Mister Gardner, don't you know me?" He stared, and I stared, and he stared. Then all of a sudden he sings out, "Tom Bowling, by the holy poker! Ladies, it's old Tom Bowling, that you've heard me talk about,—shipmate of mine in the 'Mary Ann.'" He rose up and shook hands with me ever so hearty—I sort of glanced around and took a realising sense of my mate's saucer eyes,—and then says the governor, "Plant yourself, Tom, plant yourself: you can't cat your anchor again till you've had a feed with me and the ladies!" I planted myself along-side the governor, and canted my eye around towards my mate. Well, sir, his dead-lights were bugged out like tompions; and his mouth stood that wide open that you could have laid a ham in it without him noticing it.

There was great applause at the conclusion of the old captain's story: then, after a moment's silence, a grave, pale young man said: "Had you ever met the governor before?"

The old captain looked steadily at this inquirer awhile, and then got up and walked aft without any reply. One passenger after another stole a furtive glance at the inquirer, but failed to make him out, and so gave him up. It took some little work to get the talk-machinery to running smoothly again after this derangement: but at length a conversation sprang up about that important and jealously guarded instrument, a ship's time-keeper, its exceedingly delicate accuracy, and the wreck and destruction that have sometimes resulted from its varying a few seemingly trifling moments from the true time; then, in due course, my comrade, the reverend, got off on a yarn, with a fair wind and everything

drawing. It was a true story, too,—about Captain Rounceville's shipwreck. True in every detail. It was to this effect:

Captain Rounceville's vessel was lost in mid-Atlantic, and likewise his wife and his two little children. Captain Rounceville and seven seamen escaped with life, but with little else. A small, rudely constructed raft was to be their home for eight days. They had neither provisions nor water. They had scarcely any clothing; no one had a coat but the captain. This coat was changing hands all the time, for the weather was very cold. Whenever a man became exhausted with cold, they put the coat on him and laid him down between two shipmates until the garment and their bodies had warmed life into him again. Among the sailors was a Portuguese who knew no English. He seemed to have no thought of his own calamity, but was concerned only about the captain's bitter loss of wife and children. By day, he would look his dumb compassion in the captain's face; and by night, in the darkness and the driving spray and rain, he would seek out the captain and try to comfort him with caressing pats on the shoulder. One day, when hunger and thirst were making their sure inroads upon the men's strength and spirits, a floating barrel was seen at a distance. It seemed a great find, for doubtless it contained food of some sort. A brave fellow swam to it, and after long and exhausting exertion got it to the raft. It was eagerly opened. It was a barrel of *magnesia*! On the fifth day an onion was spied. A sailor swam off and got it. Although perishing with hunger, he brought it in its integrity and put it into the captain's hands. The history of the sea teaches that among starving, shipwrecked men, selfishness is rare, and a wonder-compelling magnanimity the rule. The onion was equally divided into eight parts, and eaten with deep thanksgivings. On the eighth day a distant ship was sighted. Attempts were made to hoist an oar with Captain Rounceville's coat on it for a signal. There were many failures, for the men were but skeletons now, and strengthless. At last success was achieved, but the signal brought no help. The ship faded out of sight, and left despair behind her. By and by another ship appeared, and passed so near that the castaways, every eye eloquent with gratitude, made ready to welcome the boat that would be sent to save them. But this ship also drove on, and left these men staring their unutterable surprise and dismay into each other's ashen faces. Late in the day, still another ship came up out of the distance, but the men noted with a pang that her course was one which would not bring her nearer. Their remnant of life was nearly spent; their lips and tongues were swollen, parched, cracked with eight days' thirst; their bodies

starved; here was their last chance gliding relentlessly from them; they would not be alive when the next sun arose. Since a day or two gone by, the men had lost their voices, but now Captain Rounceville whispered, 'Let us pray.' The Portuguese patted him on the shoulder in sign of deep approval. All knelt at the base of the oar that was waving the signal-coat aloft, and bowed their heads. The sea was tossing; the sun rested, a red, rayless disk, on the sea-line in the west. When the men presently raised their heads they would have roared a hallelujah if they had had a voice; the ship's sails lay wrinkled and flapping against her masts, she was going about! Here was rescue at last, and in the very last instant of time that was left for it. No, not rescue yet, only the imminent prospect of it. The red disk sank under the sea and darkness blotted out the ship. By and by came a pleasant sound—oars moving in a boat's rollocks. Nearer it came, and nearer,—within thirty steps, but nothing visible. Then a deep voice: 'Hollo!' The castaways could not answer; their swollen tongues refused voice. The boat skirted round and round the raft, started away—the agony of it!—returned, rested the oars close at hand, listening, no doubt. The deep voice again: 'Hollo! where are ye, shipmates?' Captain Rounceville whispered to his men, saying, 'Whisper your best, boys! now—all at once!' So they sent out an eight-fold whisper in hoarse concert, 'Here!' There was life in it if it succeeded; death if it failed. After that supreme moment Captain Rounceville was conscious of nothing until he came to himself on board the saving ship. Said the reverend, concluding:

'There was one little moment of time in which that raft could be visible from that ship, and only one. If that one little fleeting moment had passed unfruitful, those men's doom was sealed. As close as that does God shave events foreordained from the beginning of the world. When the sun reached the water's edge that day, the captain of that ship was sitting on deck reading his prayer-book. The book fell; he stooped to pick it up, and happened to glance at the sun. In that instant that far-off raft appeared for a second against the red disk, its needle-like oar and diminutive signal cut sharp and black against the bright surface, and in the next instant was thrust away into the dusk again. But that ship, that captain, and that pregnant instant had had their work appointed for them in that dawn of time and could not fail of the performance. The chronometer of God never errs!'

There was deep, thoughtful silence for some moments. Then the grave, pale young man said:

'What is the chronometer of God?'

La Bella Mortu.

I

I DREAMED a pleasant dream of Death,
 As a lady fair and bright,
 Who came to my bedside suddenly
 In the stillness of the night.
 'Art thou afraid of me?' she said,
 In tones so sweet and low
 That I knew she spoke as a kindly friend,
 And not as a vengeful foe;
 And I answered cheerily, and smiled,
 'No, my belovèd! no!

II

'Why should I fear? Thou canst not come
 An hour before thy time.
 If 'tis thine hour, 'twill be thine hour,
 Appointed and sublime.
 I should have lived my life in vain,
 Nor seen where all things tend,
 If I'd not surely known and felt
 That thou wouldst be my friend,
 And that beginning were but loss
 Unless for the blessèd end.

III

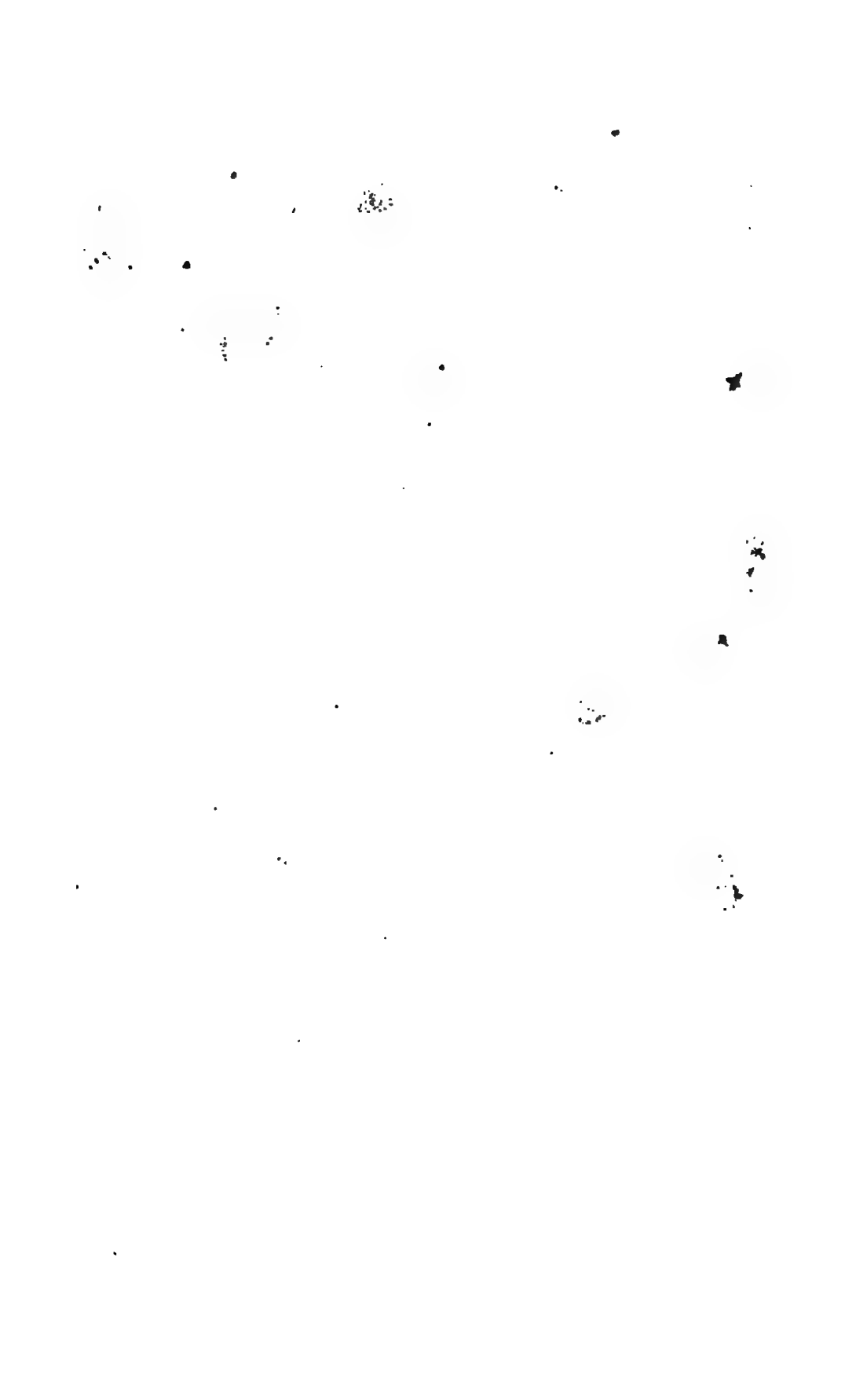
'Come to me, then, O kindly Death!
 I fear thee not at all!
 The immortal mind can never be
 The mortal body's thrall.

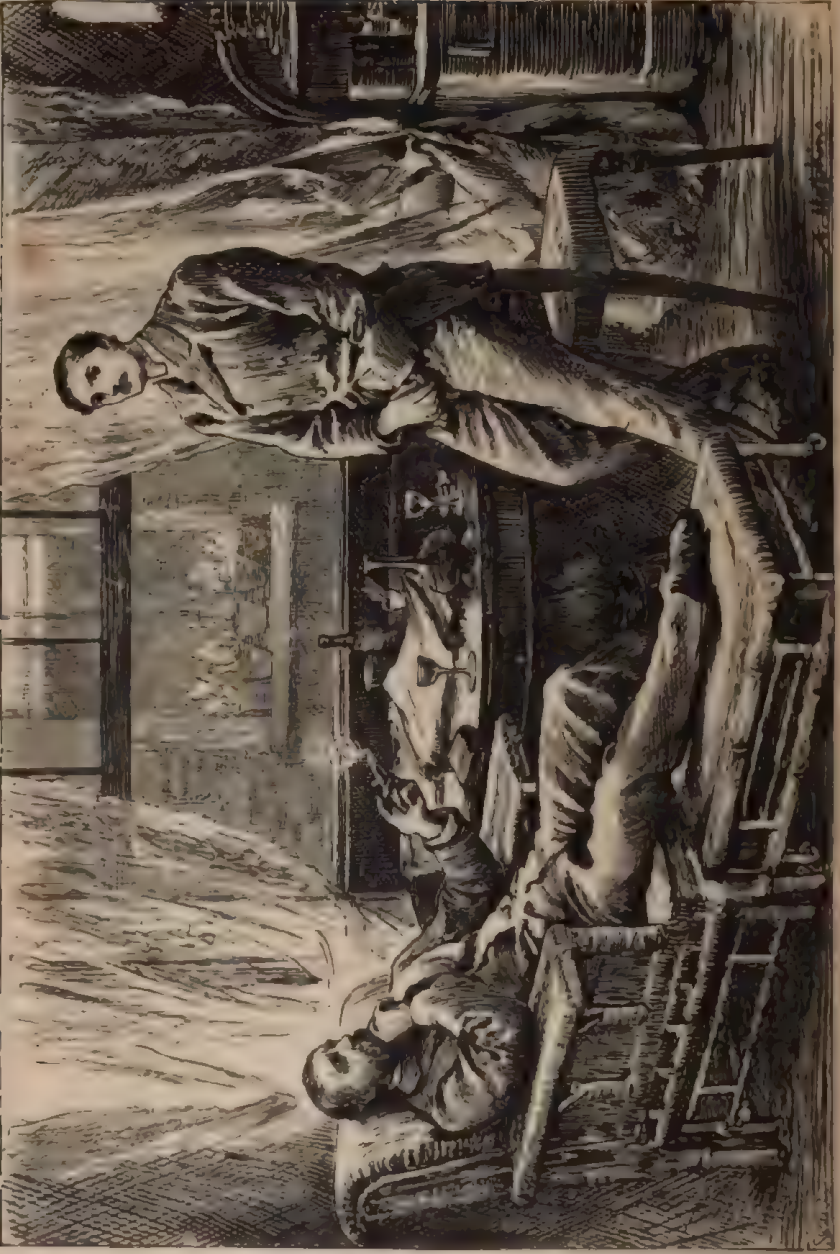
I see thee stretch thy radiant hand
To open wide the door
Through which my spirit, glad to pass,
Shall surge, and spring, and soar,
And learn to learn, and know to know,
Ever and evermore !

IV

‘ Dear mother ! on thy face I look,
And feel myself a child,
And know thou’lt purify my soul
From all that hath defiled.
I’ve no regrets to leave a world
Whose doleful paths I’ve trod :
Come when thou wilt ; I’m well content
To rest in the quiet sod,
And go with thee to the Spirit-land,
To my Father and my God ! ’

CHARLES MACKAY.





Op Prop.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BEGINNINGS OF BASENESS.

It has been stated by a classical poet, and has been therefore extremely quoted, that no one becomes very base upon a sudden; but, if that be so, it is nevertheless certain that some people take a but short time in effecting the change. Their baseness, like a good housemaid's grate, is 'ready laid,' and only requires the match of temptation to be struck on the box of opportunity to set it in a blaze. There were but six days between the time that Ralph Pennicuick had seen the dead body of his friend hanging on the post where he was butchered, and the afternoon on which he arrived at Shanghae, and during that brief interval he had made up his mind to keep the 20,000*l.* that had been the price of his own safety. This determination did not appear to him, of course, in the same light that it does to us. Except in the working out of some great revenge, no man probably beholds his own wickedness in its true proportions. The murderer does not say to himself, 'I murdered So-and-so for five shillings that I knew he had in his pocket;' but, 'I wanted So-and-so's five shillings, and he was very obstinate about it, and a scuffle ensued which ended most disastrously for him.'

Similarly, Ralph Pennicuick would by no means have admitted that he was about to cheat the dead and rob the living. He was only going to abstain from the performance of a promise that was, at the best, quixotic. In a moment of irrational apprehension he had offered to give 20,000*l.* to get out of a certain difficulty; and Conway had taken his words as though they had been an agreement on stamped paper.

If he had said, 'I would give a million,' the other might just as well have claimed the million. The sum in which he was morally indebted was too large (he said to himself) to be seriously considered as a pecuniary debt. Moreover, one must not only consider the intention of a testator, but also, as in the case of 'pious founders,' the results that are likely to flow from the proposed disposition of his property. Conway's desire was to make his daughter happy; but had he selected the due means to effect it, in making

her an heiress? She had been brought up in a simple quiet way, and the possession of all this money would be an embarrassment rather than a benefit to her, while it would expose her to the seductions of every fortune-hunter. If Conway himself had had time to reflect upon the matter, he would probably have come to the same conclusion; he would have considered ten thousand pounds, or even five thousand, a much more suitable sum. To be sure, he had spoken of some attachment between his daughter and Raymond, and Pennicnick himself had expressed some opinion not absolutely antagonistic to the young people's union; but the confusion of affairs had been such that no deliberate judgment could be formed on any matter; things were said and done, in fact, under a sort of compulsion—under which circumstances, in the eye of the law itself, agreements are not considered binding. Of course, if Nelly had had 20,000*l.* of her own, she would have been a suitable match for his son, but that her father-in-law should supply the dower—should take such a sum, as it were, out of one pocket to put into the other—was practically absurd. Twenty thousand pounds was a thousand a-year for ever.

Unfortunately, no middle course was open to him. If he was to produce Conway's will at all, he must pay the whole sum. His friend would never have bequeathed such a fortune unless the money had somehow been his to leave. It was a question, therefore, of whether he should discharge the debt, or totally ignore it.

Ralph Pennicnick did not hesitate, by this time, to look all these contingencies more or less in the face; but the motives that were attracting him, he shut out of sight as much as possible. In particular he evaded this one; that if he discharged this obligation, he should be enriching—and at his own expense—Mrs. Conway, a woman who hated him. She could not harm him, but it was not prudent to put arms—that is to say, money—in the hands of an enemy. She was proud and stiffnecked enough, as it was, without being rendered independent. Perhaps if she had been dead, and Nelly had alone been concerned in the matter, Ralph Pennicnick would not have listened to the devil—self—within him. Even as it was he did not, as we have said, propose to himself to rob the widow and the orphan. He would not give them their due, but he would give them—well, a good deal—and all in the way of kindness and generosity. The idea of playing the patron to Mrs. Conway was very pleasant to him; if she rejected his gifts, which he believed would be the case, that would be her own look-out; he would have all the more to give to Nelly, which *her mother* could hardly dissuade her from accepting, and yet

which would lay herself under the very obligation which she had resented.

When matters so incidental as these occurred to Ralph Pennicwick, we may be sure that he had made his mind up as to the main question. He had fully resolved to become a thief, and, what was worse for him, in his hearts of hearts, he knew it. The world, which credits what is done, is blind to all that might have been, in another sense than that contemplated by the poet. To its broad view there are the people outside Newgate and the people inside. But there are many persons who have earned a chamber in that building who are much better lodged than those within it, and who, considering their comparative freedom from temptation, much more deserve to be there. The man who destroys a will that has been made to his disadvantage may be committed to prison by a Lord Mayor of London who has been equally felonious, in a moral sense, by taking advantage of a will which ought to have been destroyed; but the former gentleman (if he is not used to destroying wills) feels a shock in the actual commission of the crime which the latter is spared.

The will of Arthur Conway which Ralph Pennicwick still carried in his breast-pocket was a burden to him such as the honest reader can hardly imagine. During the whole of his journey to Shanghai he had only one opportunity of perusing it quite alone, but he remembered every word of it. It was witnessed by himself and the governor of the gaol, and from the latter fact he had actually endeavoured to lay this flattering unction to his own soul—that since the witness was a Chinese, he was probably not cognisant of what he was doing, and therefore the document was illegal. It would be therefore no crime to destroy it. This probably comforted him for nearly a whole day—if to dull the pain of conscience can be called to comfort; when he suddenly recollected that if there was no will at all, Conway's wife and daughter would inherit his property. So far as he was concerned, the money therefore would—even in the eye of the law—be still owing to him.

Valueless as the document might be, it was, however, a serious incubus to him. So long as it was not destroyed, he had not yet crossed the Rubicon—except in thought—between right and wrong; and so far it was a sedative to his anxious mind; but on the other hand its existence was a material danger. If read by any eyes save his own it must needs give rise to wonder if not suspicion. It would astonish anyone who knew Arthur Conway to read that he had left 20,000*l.* behind him; but even that would be more easy to believe than that he had been mad when he executed the will.

On the last day of their journey, Major Ross and Pennicwick had left the boat, to walk for a few miles across the country and

rejoin it at a certain place, while Milburn remained on board writing letters. Ralph had changed his coat for a lighter one, and not till he had gone some distance did he remember that he had forgotten to take out the will which was left in the pocket of the coat in the cabin. Suppose Milburn should look in the coat and read the will! No apprehension of course could have been more wild and groundless; but the guilty are frightened at a shadow. Milburn was a gentleman and a man of honour; but the young are proverbially curious, and if such a thing were to happen, he, being Conway's friend and admirer, would be of all men the most dangerous to be possessed of such a secret. He had also actually made inquiry as to what the dead man was likely to have left behind him. The moralist who said that lying should be avoided because it was 'such a strain upon the memory,' might have extended his warning to all crimes on the ground of their exacting nature. The criminal must needs be always vigilant, yet always suspicious; he can never take precautions enough, nor be too prudent in his very precautions. The risks he runs may be infinitesimally small, but the danger, if discovery should occur, magnifies them to colossal proportions.

Up to that hour it had seemed to Pennicwick that the destruction of the will would have secured him complete immunity, but from henceforth this was far from being the case. If he now destroyed the will, or failed to produce it, it might be that that very circumstance would at least to one man in the world be a proof of his villany. The fear of exposure was so terrible to him, that it almost drove him back into the path of honesty which even yet lay open to him. He would still be a rich man, even if he did disburse that 20,000*l.*; but then it was such a large sum, and money was so dear to him, not only for what it commanded, but for its own sake. Moreover, though it was true he might still be honest, Ross and Milburn would think it at least strange that he should not only have kept secret his friend's testamentary instructions, but also led them to imagine that they were right in supposing he had died poor. Thus silence itself was fraught with danger; while speech—admission of any kind—absolutely bristled with it. And yet to speak, to answer questions, to supply explanations, was now become so necessary!

As to the mere narrative—the statement of what had happened at the temple and the prison—that was easy enough. In a great law case in our own country, during which there had been a more than usual amount of perjury, it was observed that no fewer than eight persons gave a coherent account of a certain dinner at which *the defendant* was said to have been entertained, and on which fact

hung a most important issue; they all described the affair in detail, and all the particulars tallied with one another so accurately that it was impossible to believe (what was, however, the actual fact) that not one of these witnesses had ever before set eyes on the man in question. This miracle was managed by the attorney for the defence, who gave a dinner to these eight witnesses with himself in the chair, and all they had to do was to associate all that was done and said, not with him, but with his client. The formula was precisely the same; they had only to put A for B. Thus, in Pennicwick's case, he had but to substitute Conway for himself, and there was no fear of his story containing any contradictions. Even its inconsistencies were not of fact—though there were inconsistencies. No one who knew Conway, for example, could understand how he could have committed such an act as the stealing of the Shay-le. To have done that, it would be justly argued, a man must be possessed of the spirit of recklessness—or he must be malicious. Now, Conway, though an agreeable companion and a general favourite, was by no means of a rollicking disposition; his behaviour was quiet, his spirits, if equable, were never high; and, indeed, it was understood that the poor fellow 'pulled a very heavy boat' as respected domestic and pecuniary matters, and had enough to trouble him. He was prudent, too, notwithstanding that he had a weakness for cards and horses, and never ran any risk that could be avoided. How, then, could he have risked—and lost—his life in the indulgence of a mischievous whim?

Then, as to malice, never was man more devoid of it. Those who knew him best, too, were aware that, though by no means a religious man himself, he respected religion, of whatever kind, in others, and it was to the last degree unlikely that he should have committed an offence that was an outrage on the feelings of our entire nation.

These were objections which Ralph Pennicwick had to meet on all sides upon his arrival at Shanghai, but which he made no effort to combat. After a severe mental struggle, he had destroyed the will, and so far 'burned his boats.' No retreat lay open to him along the broad straight road of honour, though it was still in his power to make restitution for the wrong he had committed by putting Conway's wishes into effect. Every hour, however, made this more difficult; since, after looking into his friend's affairs, he must needs say whether he died rich or poor, and act accordingly. He could scarcely make over 20,000*l.* to the widow and her daughter as a free gift, even if they would have accepted it. Such hypocrisy would have been almost as abominable as the contemplated robbery itself, and there would also be the loss of

the money. That of course was the keystone of the whole edifice of fraud and crime that Pennicuck was building up, and which every day grew larger and larger, as is usual with such buildings: an outwork of lies had to be thrown out here, and another there, to defend the citadel, till at last he could scarcely emerge from the work of his own hands to draw a breath of fresh air. His specious excuses to himself, his reasons for his wrong, were all moonshine—or rather limelight, for there was nothing natural about them; the main fact was, that he could not bring himself to part with the money, since there was none to compel him, or reproach him for keeping it.

It is not to be supposed, however, though he had escaped from the hands of his enemies with a whole skin and a comparatively undiminished purse, that Ralph Pennicuck felt triumphant or even satisfied. A man can be selfish, greedy, and even altogether bad, without such a consciousness of the fact as is disturbing to his mind: but he cannot be a scoundrel without knowing it: and this knowledge is—just at first, at all events—exceedingly disturbing.

Moreover, Pennicuck's sensibilities were still alive. Every reference to Conway's fate was painful to him, to an extreme degree. Great pangs of remorse shot through him on each occasion of them; and the pain he could not conceal was set down by those who observed it to tenderness and friendship, which made their sympathy intolerable.

It was agreed on all sides—even by Milburn himself, who did not like him—that Pennicuck had behaved 'deuced well about poor Conway.' He had paid his money right and left to ensure his comfort in prison; had spared no trouble or expense to obtain his pardon; and had done all he could, when his friend was dead, to do honour to his memory. It was quite understood that he would never look to the widow for any of these expenses; and, though he was rich, he was known to 'stick to his money,' so that his generosity was the more commendable. The military gentlemen who were addicted to sport did not forget, too, that Pennicuck's expedition up the country had been cut short by his friend's misfortune, and all the fun he had promised himself turned into misery, which they said was 'rather rough' on Pennicuck, who, instead of shooting 'a jolly lot of game among the hills,' had now to concern himself with business affairs in relation to his dead friend. In one particular, however, Conway's friends were not inclined to approve of Pennicuck's conduct. He was not so solicitous as they thought he ought to be to 'make a row at the embassy' about what had happened. The British minister ought to be urged to communicate with his government, who should require Conway's

murderers to be given up to justice. If this was refused, then let there be war. To this Pennicuick replied that he was the best judge of his own responsibility in the matter; and that, while he lamented what had occurred as deeply as any man, he could not bring himself to state that murder had been done. Conway had fallen a victim, it is true, to Chinese superstition, but everything had been done in course of law. He could not in honesty give such evidence as might be made a *casus belli*.

‘But, at all events, these beggars should be made to give compensation to the widow,’ urged the gentlemen of the mess-table.

‘As to that,’ said Pennicuick modestly, ‘I will myself take care that she at least suffers no pecuniary loss from the misfortune that has befallen her.’ This assurance earned him golden opinions; and when, after a very few days, it was found that Arthur Conway had died worth next to nothing, everyone took comfort because of this friend that had the power and will to serve the dear ones he had left behind. It could even be said that those who knew most about Ralph Pennicuick at Shanghae had the best opinion of him. But then only few people had any personal knowledge of him: while a good many—indeed, the whole English-speaking population—had heard something of his adventures. On the occasion of his first return to Shanghae, however, so little had been known for certain about the matter, that a rumour had got about—and, as we have seen, had reached Hong Kong—that it was Pennicuick and not Conway who had been put to death. It was easily accounted for enough, since the two names were mentioned together, and those who knew Conway took it for granted that the other man must have been the one in the scrape; but the error was a great annoyance to the real survivor. Just as a criminal is sometimes convicted by help of a piece of evidence that happens to be in itself false, so by a mere accident Pennicuick found that part imputed to him in the catastrophe which he had actually played; and though his own reappearance in the flesh soon set the matter right at Shanghae, the other story had by that time gone elsewhere, beyond the reach of such personal contradiction, and had received the usual additions and exaggerations on its way. Worse than all, as he discovered on his arrival at Hong Kong, this rumour had actually been telegraphed to England; and, had they not taken great pains to ascertain the truth before replying to Raymond’s inquiry, his own bankers might have confirmed the first report, so strongly were they assured on all sides of its correctness.

The terms of Ralph Pennicuick’s telegram to his son had been, as we have seen, concise and cold enough; he was, in fact, greatly troubled at the error that had taken place, to the probable effects of

which, in the way of gossip and scandal, he was keenly alive; and, moreover, he felt the extreme need of caution. He had not yet shaped out for himself the course to be adopted in relation to Mrs. Conway and her daughter, when he should return to England, though he had vague ideas of being very patronising and munificent. The breach of faith he had committed began itself, indeed, already to sit more lightly on his conscience; but there were matters in connection with it that he had not considered—a few weeks ago, in fact, he would have thought them beneath consideration—but which now gave him great annoyance, and even distress of mind.

Everything that had relation to the dead man was a source of mental trouble to him. It had been painful to him, as we have seen, to describe, even after his own fashion, the details of Conway's misadventure and death; and, though his actual remorse showed signs of mitigation, this feeling by no means wore out with time; it weighed, too, upon his mind like lead that he would have to go over the whole matter again when he reached England, and, what was worse than all, to Mrs. Conway herself. Though he had telegraphed curtly, 'Break it to the family,' he thought of the task he had thus imposed upon his son for many an hour. He pictured to himself again and again Nelly's silent agony, and her mother's artificial composure, under which would be even sharper pangs at work than in her daughter's case. He had the sagacity to comprehend how much worse would these fatal tidings fall upon their ears from the circumstance of their having already received the false report. Ralph Pennicueick entertained no 'illusions' respecting either himself or his fellow-creatures. It must have been an uncommonly good piece of news to Mrs. Conway and the girl to hear that he was dead and gone: that woman had always hated him, and had probably not even taken pains to conceal her satisfaction at his fate. Nelly would have said 'How shocking!' and then they would have both set to work to discuss what money he had left behind him, and how long Raymond would wait out of decent respect till he came to see them—and propose. He had been so wrapt up in self, and so little observant of his son's behaviour, that he had guessed nothing of the attachment between the young people, till Conway's last request had suggested it to his mind; but now he perceived how his death would have made the course of true love run smooth, and how his being alive must be resented as an obstacle to it. In picturing all this, he showed great acumen; and if he failed altogether in representing to himself the feelings of his son, it was not for want of cleverness. He prided himself on his ability to 'put himself in the place of other people'—in quite another sense from that wherein he had just

given proof of his powers in poor Conway's case—but he could not penetrate Raymond's nature, the dutiful simplicity of which was altogether unintelligible to him. He saw his son wearing a mask of sorrow, but in reality congratulating himself that he was his own master, and had come into his father's kingdom; and though he allowed that this state of things was natural, he resented it.

He was coming home, in short, in a bad humour with himself and everybody else, and also, for the first time in his life, in bad health. For what could it be but some touch of indigestion, or other vulgar malady, that had rendered him of late so nervous?

'Nerves' had been heretofore a thing unknown to him—now the least thing sudden or unexpected startled him. When he was in Conway's quarters at Shanghai, for example, packing up some of his dead friend's little 'belongings'—a few books, half-a-dozen drawings, &c.—the following circumstance had occurred. He had been looking at a sketch which called to mind some scene upon the fatal journey they had taken together, and was just placing it along with the rest, when he suddenly became conscious that some one was standing behind him. It was, in fact, Conway's servant, whose entrance had not attracted his observation, and nothing was less extraordinary than his being there. Yet it was full a minute before Ralph Pennicuick could bring himself to turn round and look the man in the face. He did not believe that dead men rose even in the other world, and much less therefore in this; and yet—well, of course it was only liver, but these ridiculous apprehensions were recurrent. He spoke to the regimental surgeon on the matter, in a guarded manner and without mentioning names, and that gentleman had affirmed that he was 'a cup too low,' and recommended a little stimulant. Pennicuick, always moderate in his mode of life, because enjoyment was a science with him, had accordingly begun to take a few drops of brandy. But even this did not effect a complete cure. When he went into his cabin on board the steamer, the first thing he saw there was a coffin with 'Arthur Conway' upon it. An absurd delusion enough, since it was only poor Conway's black portmanteau which had been placed there by mistake instead of his own; but the same weird terror had seized him as on the previous occasion, and he acknowledged to himself that Ralph Pennicuick was not the man he had been. 'That infernal climate' had no doubt affected him, and a few days at sea would make all right.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MAN OF BUSINESS.

WHATEVER may be said of woman's disadvantages, she possesses the great gift, denied to the male, of believing or disbelieving certain things according to her own desires. The evidence of her own senses, and of all human and even divine testimony, goes for next to nothing when she once takes a thing into her head. 'If an angel from heaven were to tell me so-and-so,' she says (it generally relates to her husband), 'I should not believe him;' and there is little doubt but that she would not. Man, weak creature, gives up his illusions when experience has proved them baseless—there are examples of his having even parted with his prejudices; but woman, like a rock amid a world of waters, is deaf to the universal voice—whether it come in lap or roar—and remains immovable. Even if her belief is undermined by the incessant beat of the wave, the result as respects others is the same, since she never shows it.

Now, Mrs. Conway had made up her mind—it was a small parcel, but exceedingly compact—that her husband was not dead. Her chief reason (though, in truth, reason had very little to do with it) was, that the news came from Ralph Pennicuick, who (so she put it to herself without circumlocution) was a liar. She would have believed, if it had been possible, that Pennicuick was dead; she wanted to believe it very much, and she had believed it—both excellent causes for an immutable faith. But since he had apparently telegraphed to his son in person, and was coming home in the next steamer, she was obliged to give way in that one particular. All the more steadily, however, did she cling to her other fixed idea. Pennicuick would return to England with a lie in his mouth about her husband. His statement that his friend was dead was almost evidence to her that he was alive; and as to his story of his having been put to death for an outrage upon Chinese religious feeling, if the sun had turned black in corroboration of such an assertion, she would only have concluded that Pennicuick had found means to apply tar or caustic to the sun. While poor Nelly, therefore, was overwhelmed with grief and pity for the loss of her father, her mother maintained an inviolable calm which was set down by the little world around her as proof of her want of feeling.

'All we can say is,' said the more charitable, 'that it is better than hypocrisy, since it is certain she never cared for her husband.'

But even these persons allowed that such conduct was indecent. For many days she would not even go into mourning, and, when persuaded so to do by her daughter, assumed her widow's weeds under protest.

'I tell you, your father is alive, child; nor should I give up my conviction to your importunities, but that it suits me to wear mourning, because of other things that have happened.'

Nelly was well aware that her mother referred to her disappointment about Ralph Pennicwick, and to the change in her own fortunes brought about by that gentleman's being still in the flesh. For it was one thing to poor Nelly to have had her grief on account of the loss that had befallen her lover mitigated by the thought of their assured union; and quite another to have her wretchedness on her father's account enhanced by the knowledge that Raymond was removed from her still more completely than before. And yet in both cases she strove her best to be unselfish. She wept for her parent's fate upon its own account, and only thought of her own in relation to him. She was miserable because she was never to see him more; never to know how the dear bronzed face was changed from that whose likeness hung in the drawing-room, and a copy of which she had taken for her own little room. It had been the dream of her young life to welcome him to England, and to effect a reconciliation between him and her mother, so that his home should be home indeed. She had fancied there were misconstructions, misunderstandings, between her parents, that her eyes, quickened by Love, might penetrate, and which she might smooth away, and that they might all be, one day, happy together; and all this was over now. The kind heart, that, though so far away, had beaten, she knew, in sympathy with her own, was pulseless; the father would never clasp his child to his arms; the husband was dead, and the breach between him and the woman he had sworn to love and cherish was not to be healed in this world.

It was not quite so bad for Nelly as for some bereaved ones, whom everything about them reminds of their calamity. There were not those unmistakable links between her father's memory and the ordinary life at home which exist in most cases, and the snapping of each of which costs a sharp pang; but such few things as were connected with him had from their very rarity an unusual significance. His letters were sacred treasures, and the perusal of any of them now carried her beyond the bounds of ordinary sorrow; she perceived, for the first time with distinctness, how the dead man had been bound up in that distant daughter of his, and what unaccustomed pains he had taken to show his love for her, and to ask

her confidence. How strange it was that he, a soldier, among such stirring and alien scenes, should have striven to enter into her childish thoughts, and interest himself in her homely wishes! What a gentle heart must this man have had who, reaching his brown hand as it were across the world, took her own little palm in his and pressed it so tenderly! In particular, it struck her, how generous was the nature that never took advantage of the love it had evoked for itself, to persuade her to take his side in the domestic quarrel. He could not write to her, as fathers should do, of her mother, but he never used an expression that could be construed as one of disrespect. Yet Nelly's sense of justice prevented her even now from being her father's partisan. She understood how the very love he had shown for her must have been gall and wormwood to her mother, for whom he had expressed none, and yet she herself had never suffered for it. Her mother had never betrayed a spark of jealousy, though bitter things had escaped her lips upon her own account. And her silence now had an immense significance. Its meaning was, in spite of her reiterated assurances that she knew herself to be no widow, that she had in truth a secret doubt about it. Ralph Pennicuck might have lied to her as to the circumstances of her husband's death, and yet have told the truth as to the facts. And in time there was confirmation of this. The scanty income of Mrs. Conway and her daughter was paid through an army agent at certain dates, and an instalment became presently due. As it did not arrive, the widow wrote to the agent, and his reply was that his esteemed client Captain Conway was dead, and that there would be no more remittances. He probably thought that the widow's application for the money was either the most impudent proceeding that had been ever heard of west of Temple Bar, or that it afforded the strongest proof within his experience of the ignorance of the female mind respecting business matters.

Mrs. Conway put the letter into her daughter's hand, and observed quietly, 'This does not alter my opinion, Nelly; but I suppose we must now act as you suggested.'

This was in reference to Nelly's proposal that they should consult Mr. Wardlaw as to their affairs; on the sale of their furniture, and the realisation of what other little property they possessed; and generally upon the subject of their means of livelihood.

'Shall we go together, mamma?'

'No, dear; I think, as the Wardlaws are your friends rather than mine, you had better go alone.'

Nelly knew very well that it was not to escape a disagreeable conversation that her mother had thus deputed the matter to her,

but to be spared the humiliation of owning herself even by implication in the wrong. She could hardly consult upon arrangements to be made in consequence of her husband's death, and yet maintain her theory that he was alive. So, after their slender midday meal was over, Nelly, dressed in her deep black garb, and with the grave slow step that only genuine grief can teach the young and healthful, took her way to their friendly neighbours. It was now nearly five weeks from the date of her father's death, and since that tidings had been brought to them by Raymond she had not seen him. We may say at once that this was not his fault. He had hesitated to intrude upon their calamity for the first few days, and then had written to Mrs. Conway to ask leave to visit them. She had declined to see him for the present, at the same time intimating that when they felt equal to a second interview she would give him notice, and up to this time he had heard nothing further. Mrs. Conway had penned her letter without consultation with her daughter, or even letting her know that she had heard from Raymond; her distrust and hatred of Ralph Pennicwick were just then so extreme, that they had almost extended to the young man himself; his presence at all events would remind her of his father, and was therefore unwelcome to her. But when Nelly had expressed her quiet surprise at Raymond's absence, Mrs. Conway did not conceal the step she had taken, though she hid her two reasons for it. 'Since this man is coming back so soon, my dear, I think it wise to keep Raymond at a distance. There may be nothing—as you tell me—but friendliness between you, but that Ralph Pennicwick will never believe. I do not wish him to reproach us in our stricken state with laying a trap to catch his boy.'

'Oh, mamma, how would it be possible for us—nay, for anybody—to think of such things so soon——' Here she stopped, remembering that her mother did not admit the premises alluded to, and half afraid that she should have angered her—as had been more than once the case—by assuming them. But it was with quiet calm that Mrs. Conway answered, 'You speak in ignorance, Nelly—judging of others by your own standard. You are one of those who think they see good in everybody when it is only the reflection of their own proper feelings. To suppose that Ralph Pennicwick would take such a small thing as his friend's death into account, in ascribing a motive to our actions, shows a simple faith indeed. He will find us in the dust, but let us not give him an opportunity of treading us under foot.'

'Only do not let Raymond think us unkind,' pleaded Nelly.

'I care nothing what he thinks, nor what anybody thinks. I——' then came the symptoms familiar to her daughter by this

time—the hand pressed upon the side, and the face of pain, and the break of speech in its full tide.

‘Everything shall be done as you please, dear mamma,’ said Nelly soothingly. ‘Pray, pray, do not distress yourself.’

And from that moment she had made no mention of Raymond. The motives that actuated her mother were unintelligible to her; it seemed to her inconsistent that a few weeks ago she should have seemed to advocate her immediate marriage with her lover without his father’s consent, and that now, because Mr. Pennicwick was coming home, she was to be even deprived of his son’s friendship. She did not understand that a middle course in relation to Ralph Pennicwick was as impossible to her mother as it is to the drunkard with respect to wine. She could keep him at a distance and treat him with scorn, or she could act in flat defiance of him. But she could not be on such terms with him as would give opportunity for patronage, or the imputation of interested conduct.

No doubt the sense of separation from Raymond made Nelly’s heart more heavy than it would have been; but her thoughts for the present were almost monopolised by her recent loss. The errand on which she was now bound to Coromandel House was sad and serious enough, but her calamity so outweighed the results of it that she did not as yet realise them; in her knowledge that she was bereaved she forgot that she might be also penniless. She had timed her visit so as to find the master of the house at home, without reference to the canonical hours for ‘calling;’ and expected, as usual, to be at once ushered into the dining-room, to find Mr. Wardlaw with a handkerchief cast decently over his face, as was his custom after dessert, and his wife—knitting-needle in hand—keeping guard over his slumbers.

Upon this occasion, however, she was shown into the library, where perhaps was to be seen the very newest collection of books on view anywhere; for in London, literature—with the exception of the catalogue of the auction marts—had been neglected by Mr. Wardlaw, while in the country he had understood a library to be a *sine quâ non*, and had provided himself with one well furnished, and thirty feet by twenty in length, accordingly. In a few minutes her hostess entered the room, with a face in which Nelly was quick to read not only sympathy for her own case, but a personal trouble. ‘My darling, this is indeed kind of you, and like the old times,’ she said. ‘To keep aloof from one’s true friends when misfortune overtakes one is a bad plan; but I know it is not your fault that we have seen so little of one another lately; and as for your mother, I will say nothing more than that I am thankful that she has let you come at last.’

'She has not only let me come, but sent me, Mrs. Wardlaw; though my visit is not, I confess, without a selfish object. I am come to consult your husband about my poor father's affairs.'

'Very good; he will be delighted to see you, and will give you, I am sure, the best advice in his power. We shall find him in the drawing-room, and, I hope, awake.'

She led the way into the room in question, where at the dessert-table—Nelly noticed with surprise that it was laid for three—sat Mr. Wardlaw, with a glass of spirits and water before him, a beverage he much preferred to wine.

'Now sit down, my dear, and take an orange,' said he, patting Nelly's head as if she were a child; 'you're as welcome as nutmeg to punch in this house, and always will be; how's your ma?'

'Mamma is pretty well as to health, Mr. Wardlaw; though in grievous trouble, as you may imagine. A new cause of worry to her cropped up this morning, in the fact of Messrs. Boxe & Co. declining to pay her quarter's allowance, on account of my poor father's death. It was nothing more than what was to be expected, of course; but you know my mother's views; and now that matters have come to a crisis, she has sent me here to ask your counsel. She says that I know as much about poor dear papa's affairs as she does, but indeed I know very little; and it seems to me that all that can be done at present is to make arrangements about our house. Of course we cannot afford to live there, in any case——'

'And why not?' put in Mrs. Wardlaw; 'you must live somewhere, Nelly, and why not there?'

'I am afraid that our landlord will say "he does not see the necessity,"' said Nelly smiling. 'The house does not require much "keeping up," it is true, but it requires an income of some sort—and I don't know that we have any.'

'You must have got *something*, Nelly,' said Mrs. Wardlaw confidently. 'But there, John will tell you all about it.'

'My dear, I must have the facts before me,' said Mr. Wardlaw, with the air of a man who only needs the raw materials to indite an epic. 'In the first place, Nelly, what does your father's will say?'

'We don't even know if dear papa left a will, Mr. Wardlaw.'

'A will! of course he left a will!' answered the merchant. 'The only question is whether the will is in England.'

'But if he had nothing to leave?' said Nelly simply.

'Stuff and nonsense! everybody has something,' said Mr. Wardlaw. 'The idea of your mother's being in such a state of

helpless ignorance, Nelly! she must be worse than *my* wife. She always seemed to me a sensible, prudent woman, too.'

'She is very careful and prudent, Mr. Wardlaw, so far as has been possible for her; but there were reasons—I think you will understand them—why she has not pressed dear papa of late as to our pecuniary position; they were not on confidential terms, and the subject of money——'

'Of course, my dear,' interrupted Mrs. Wardlaw, willing to spare her favourite what she knew would be a painful explanation; 'that is intelligible enough.'

'Not to me, my dear, I confess,' observed her husband drily. 'Whether I were confidential with a party or not, I should insist upon knowing how my affairs stood. As matters are, then, you don't really know whether your father has left five thousand pounds or fivepence? You can tell me, I suppose, at least whether his life was insured?'

'It was not so when he left England, nor has he mentioned having insured his life in any of his letters. You see,' said Nelly, in mitigation, as Mr. Wardlaw beat the air with his hands in horrified dismay, 'dear papa found it hard enough to save out of his professional income' (the poor girl knew nothing about his successes at play, or the little thoroughbred he had 'financed' for a couple of racing seasons) 'to support his wife and daughter, and had nothing to put by for an insurance premium.'

'I see,' said Mr. Wardlaw, in a tone that suggested that it was a bad look-out indeed.

'You will wonder what I come to consult you about, Mr. Wardlaw,' continued Nelly, with a ghost of a smile, 'since it appears ——'

'Nay, my dear, I don't wonder,' interposed Mr. Wardlaw kindly; 'it is the most natural thing in the world that you should do so. And though, of course, until the China mail comes in, nothing certain can be known of your affairs, I can perhaps be of help in the mean time.'

'That is what we thought,' answered Nelly eagerly. 'It was you who were so kind as to take the house for us; you will know what to advise us as to giving it up. We have got it for the year, mamma understands.'

'Oh, yes; you have undoubtedly the right of remaining in it for the year.'

'But it is not paid for up to the end of the twelve months?'

Mrs. Wardlaw's face was a study; she had moved behind her young friend, and was making the most eloquent signals to her husband to answer the girl in the affirmative.

‘Paid for!’ echoed the merchant, with a clumsy laugh. ‘Oh yes, I paid for it myself—that is, of course, with your father’s money.’

‘Then we have a roof over our heads at least,’ said Nelly, with a sigh of relief. ‘You see, if we had had to move at once into small lodgings, we should have had to part with all our furniture, and there are some things—though it is only a fancy—that I should be loth to part with, unless it were absolutely necessary.’

‘Which it never will be,’ put in Mrs. Wardlaw confidently. ‘Do you suppose there is not a room to keep things for you at Coromandel House!’

‘What Miss Nelly is thinking of is that she may be obliged to dispose of some superfluous articles,’ observed the merchant gravely.

‘Then she ought to be ashamed of herself,’ put in Mrs. Wardlaw indignantly, ‘since she ought to know that she has friends as would not stand by and see it done.’

‘Nay, wife, the young lady is right. It is better to look matters in the face, and make up one’s mind to a thing when it has to be done.’

‘That is what I am striving to do,’ said Nelly simply; ‘to begin a new sort of life, where pleasure may still be pleasure, but a source of profit also. In case poor mamma is left with nothing—absolutely nothing, I mean—I think—indeed, I know that I can earn sufficient by my pencil, or rather my paint-brush, to supply our modest needs. I have already made inquiries at an artist-colourman’s in town, who puts pictures for sale in his window; and I am not without hopes. I confess it is an immense relief to me to find that we can stay on for a time at least in our present quarters, since I could scarcely do my work so well in such lodgings as we had, for example, in Gower Street. And oh, Mr. Wardlaw, I am so much obliged to you——’

‘Pooh, pooh! for nothing at all. Why, what have I done?’ inquired the merchant with an aggrieved air, as though some imputed misconduct of his own had melted the poor girl to tears.

‘It is your kindness,’ sobbed poor Nelly. ‘I see you are so sorry for us.’

‘I am sorry for your changed circumstances, my dear,’ said the merchant, patting her head, as she took her leave, ‘that is, so far as you yourself are concerned, and of course your mother likewise; but personally, and from a commercial point of view, my wife and I have cause to be pleased. We see our way to getting some excellent pictures, by an artist we have long admired, dirt cheap—cheaper even than at an auction.’

'He shall pay their weight in gold for them, my dear,' cried Mrs. Wardlaw indignantly.

'The market price—the market price, and a little under on account of personal friendship,' answered her husband, waving her away with his toddy-spoon. 'The great principles of buying in the cheapest market, and taking advantage of the necessities of the vendor, are cardinal points.'

'You are a greedy, grasping, selfish wretch, John,' cried Mrs. Wardlaw, 'to talk like that even in fun. Come along, my dear, and don't waste another smile on him.'

Oh, rare and blessed gift of kindness! what matters it in what guise you come to the bruised human heart? The rough but genial humour of the honest merchant touched poor Nelly as deeply as his wife's sympathetic tears. When we are in trouble, and find friends are true, the benefit is infinite, since it seems to us a sign that God also has not forsaken us. And that visit to Coromandel House had for Nelly the same sweet solace that is found at shrines.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A BITTER TRIAL.

'You must not mind John, dear,' said Mrs. Wardlaw, as she took Nelly's hand and led her with a gentle violence from the front door, to which she was tending, into the library once more.

'Mind him!' said Nelly, with a smile. 'Indeed, I only mind him in the sense of liking him very much.'

'Well, I shall not believe that, if you run away from the house as though you were in a huff, and don't give me a minute's talk to myself. How nice my pretty pet does look,' added she, holding the girl at arm's length and sighing, 'even in her black things!'

'I do not feel nice, dear Mrs. Wardlaw. I am very unthankful, I fear, for the good of the past, and very resentful of the evil to come.'

'And quite right too,' exclaimed Mrs. Wardlaw impulsively; 'or, rather, it's only natural. It does seem very hard that a bright little innocent creature like you should suffer so, now, doesn't it?'

'Well, I don't think it ever struck me quite in that light, dear Mrs. Wardlaw,' said Nelly, laughing; 'but of course it seems hard. My sense of loss, however, will wear away in time, I suppose, and poverty is a burden that soon fits itself to the back.'

'Well, I'm not so certain about that, Nelly. I wouldn't admit as much to John for a fifty-pound note, but I will confess to you that I never got over the discomfort of those omnibuses. It was

necessary, or I thought it was, to use them at one time, but I had rather have walked the whole distance if my legs could have done it. Never was more dismay and discomposure brought for twopence or threepence than I got for my money. In the first place, there were "Pickpockets, male and female, beware!" staring me in the face, at the bottom of the table of fares. I never picked a pocket in my life, and the insult used to bring the blood into my face to begin with.'

'But, surely,' said Nelly, laughing, 'that notice is meant for the honest people.'

'I don't know which way it is to be read, my dear; but it is just as bad to be put on your guard against everybody that sits next or opposite to you. Then I was always as much afraid of losing my purse as of having it stolen, for what would become of me when I got out, and couldn't pay? Still I went on with those omnibuses—out of principle, my dear—until I had that accident opposite your house in Gower Street. Then says John, "Now, in future you take cabs." But, lor, that was nearly as bad as the other. Hansoms of course I would no more have trusted myself to than to winged griffins, but the very first four-wheeler I engaged to bring me home from a friend's house, where I had been to tea, took me right away among strange streets, and presently down a steep place into darkness, and then stopped. When I expected nothing less than to be robbed and murdered, the man put his head into the window, and said, "This is my mews; and I am a-going to put a fresh horse into the shafts, that's all." But it was nearly enough to do for me. Then again I had sad colds at that time, and used to lose my voice. I could hail a cab, of course; but when I had to say where I wished to go to, it was very embarrassing. Many a time have I gone quite close to the wheel and beckoned the man to lean his head down that I might whisper in his ear, and his only reply has been to drive off wildly, and almost over my toes, thinking perhaps I was a mad woman and wanted to bite him.'

'Well, now you have got a carriage of your own, Mrs. Wardlaw, all your troubles are over,' said Nelly, who, though her mind was fixed on serious matters, had a great stock of patience and good temper, and knew that as a listener she was conferring happiness on her hostess.

'Not all, my dear, I do assure you, as I was afraid you would see by my red eyes when you entered the house. I'm fairly worried to death about them tambourines.'

'What tambourines?'

'Why, that gross of them as I told you John picked up at some auction, and brought home with him six months ago. One

hundred and forty-four tambourines all blocking up my store cupboard! Well, since it was so long since he bought the things, I began to hope he had forgotten all about them; and the fact is, I put them into a sale which I saw advertised in John's paper. And now, only think, they have all come back again on my hands.'

'What, couldn't you sell them?'

'Oh, yes! I sold them fast enough, but unfortunately it was John that bought them. Bought his own tambourines, my dear, at an advance of a shilling apiece, as I'm a sinful woman!'

'And does not he know what he has done?'

'Not a bit of it; and it makes me so miserable, because I've got to tell him. He says, "Here's another gross of tambourines, my dear; a little dearer than the last, I am sorry to say, but it would never do to let the price go down."'

At this Nelly could no longer restrain herself, but broke into a hearty laugh—such as had not escaped her since her first day of mourning.

'That's music,' said Mrs. Wardlaw, laughing too; 'and there's one within hearing of it, who will rejoice in it even more than I do. Nelly dear, I've been a-talking about this, and that, and the other, but nothing—except the tambourines—has had any real hold upon me. I was striving to keep your heart up, and to turn it mayhaps, if I could see the chance, to listen to one as loves you dearly. Raymond Pennicuck is waiting in the boudoir yonder for one clasp of your hand—if that is all you will give him.'

'Raymond here!' said Nelly, with a flush of anger as well as of distress; 'why was I not told at first?'

'Because I was afraid you might have gone away, my darling, from a mistaken sense of what was right. Of course he did not know you were coming. He was dining with John and me, not as I believe because we are much attraction for him, but simply because we are your neighbours and friends, and like to talk about you. When he heard you were at the door, he was for running away, lest his presence should give you pain. But I said, "No! you just wait here till I talk to her a bit, and she'll see you, never fear." And you *will* see him, won't you, Nelly?'

'Yes; I will see him.'

She had grown pale again, now, and calm. Indeed, Mrs. Wardlaw thought she had never seen her 'bright little fairy,' as she was wont to call her, so quiet and resolute-looking.

'You are not going to be hard upon the poor lad, I trust,' said she apprehensively. 'I hoped I had put a little life and spirit into you; if it is not a good time for him to see you, let him bide awhile, or he will lay all the blame upon my shoulders.'

‘It is as good a time now, Mrs. Wardlaw, as any time will be.’

‘Lor, my dear, you talk as if you were an old woman; and life is but beginning with you.’

‘I know it,’ said Nelly gravely; though, indeed, she felt as if life—or all that was worth living for—was finished rather than beginning. ‘Where is Raymond?’

Mrs. Wardlaw rose and opened a door^a that communicated with her boudoir, an apartment which had been put to its first use that day. As she never wrote, or read, for pleasure, nor played on any musical instrument, nor had any intimate acquaintances with whom to enjoy a *tête-à-tête*, the room was a superfluous luxury; but this afternoon it had offered an asylum to Raymond Pennicuck, where he had been placed in honourable imprisonment until it should be decided whether Nelly was to see him or not. He had guessed pretty accurately the cause of her long silence, but that had only made it the more insupportable to him. If his visits were unwelcome now, when he was his own master, how much less welcome would they be after his father’s return, when it would be taken for granted that he was subject to his dictation. As Mrs. Wardlaw had stated with such characteristic humility, it was for some news of Nelly, some hint perhaps as to her position with respect to himself, that he had called that day at Coromandel House, where of course he had been pressed to stay to dinner. And now, by a stroke of fortune—which might be good or bad—an opportunity was afforded him of getting an explanation of the state of affairs from Nelly’s own lips.

The room was as elegant as the upholsterer’s art could make it—with dainty hand-paintings on the walls and ceilings, which (as that astute tradesman had himself observed) had ‘removed the apartment beyond the domain of upholstery,’ while a magnificent stretch of landscape was commanded from the open windows; but neither the view without nor the scene within had attracted Raymond’s attention. He stood with his hand upon the central table, waiting and watching for the summons that he felt would come, but to which he had looked forward by no means with delighted expectation. His eyes would indeed be gladdened by the sight of Nelly—it was a physical impossibility that it should be otherwise; but the words of her lips might be far indeed from those he longed for. He had begun to understand her backwardness to accept his proffered love since the change that had fallen on his own fortunes. If she really thought it her duty to oppose his wishes upon the ground of his father’s disapprobation of their union, there was small chance of his winning her, for that objection was not likely to be removed. He had thought it possible, when

he had asked her permission to quote her own consent among the arguments he was about to make use of to his father; and of course, when he had thought his father was dead, the marriage had seemed certain; the question had become one of 'how soon' only. But from this last height of assurance his fall had been as severe as it was sudden. All the objections of his father had once again presented themselves to his mind, accompanied with a certain prejudice of the force of which he had not taken much account. He had long understood that Mrs. Conway and his father were antagonistic; so much so, that he and the Captain could hardly have been such close friends had the pillars of domestic peace at home been unshaken; but he had thought this enmity lay mainly on the lady's side—was one of those unreasoning prejudices which women so often entertain, and which in her case amounted to mania. But now he had begun to think this hate was reciprocated. The terms of his father's telegram occurred to him again and again, and always with a renewed impression of hardness and antagonism. 'Conway killed by Chinese. Break the news to family.' The curtness of it almost bordered upon cruelty. Indeed, to his morbid apprehension, it seemed to have been couched purposely in that hard style, not to save a few sovereigns—which had probably been his father's chief motive—but to express a fixed hostility. And at the back of all this there was the ominous silence of Nelly herself for the last five weeks.

Thus it was that with no high-wrought expectation Raymond saw the boudoir door open, and reveal the girl he loved by the side of his hostess. That she smiled upon him, and shook his hand so frankly, were no longer the good omens he would have taken them for a while ago; if she had hung back and looked embarrassed or even sorrowful, he would have liked it better, for these friendly signs might well belong to that rôle of 'sister' which she had already announced her intention of playing.

'I shall leave you young people together to make your own explanations,' said Mrs. Wardlaw. 'I suppose you have no objection to be left alone with him, Nelly?'

This was by no means said in a light vein. She understood that there was a kink in the cable of true love, so serious that electric communication was suspended; and she was not sure whether a private interview with Raymond would at present be agreeable to the girl.

'I have certainly no objection,' said Nelly gravely. 'Why should I have?'

The question was addressed to Mrs. Wardlaw, as she left the room, but Raymond replied to it.

'I know not why, indeed, Nelly; but it does seem as though you did entertain objections to see me. Do you know it is five weeks since we met last?'

'I know it is a long time, Raymond; I have felt it to be very long, believe me.'

'You would have seen me, then, if the choice had lain with yourself?' said Raymond eagerly.

'Yes, I think so. I would not so long have delayed the—*the* explanation, as Mrs. Wardlaw calls it, between us,—which must needs have come sooner or later. Matters are not as they were, Raymond, when you and I spoke to one another'—she hesitated, and a faint flush overspread her cheek—'that afternoon in the garden. They were not favourable to the wish you were so good as to express, even then; I did not even then share the hope that you entertained——'

'But you shared the wish,' put in Raymond pleadingly; 'whatever you are going to say, at least do not retract your own confession.'

'I deny that I confessed to you anything, Raymond; and I am sure you are not so cruel as to put me to the question now. As things stood at that time, I repeat, the probability of what you desired being accomplished was very small. It has now dwindled into nothing.'

'Who says that? who has a right to say it?' inquired Raymond quickly.

'I say it, Raymond; I who have a right above all others to speak upon this matter, since my life—or the peace of my life—depends upon it. These are selfish words, you may say; Heaven knows that they are not so: but you are welcome to believe them selfish. If my mother and I were but poor, and my father were yet alive to be a bond in some sort between your father and ourselves, your love for me would be likely to meet with opposition from him; how, think you, would he regard it now, when we are not only poor but penniless, and the tie—slender at best—is snapped that bound him to us!'

'There is at least a hope,' urged Raymond; 'why stifle it?'

'No, Raymond, there is no hope; and even if there were, that is, even if your father could be induced to give his consent, and to make you some allowance such as would be fitting—you understand, I hope, that I am speaking of your position, not of mine—I say, even then I doubt whether my mother would permit me to accept his bounty. It may be prejudice; but it is no use to combat it, and she is my mother, the only being to whom my duty is now solely owed.'

'Yet love is duty too, dear Nelly,' pleaded Raymond; 'and though to my sole parent I also owe obedience, and have never shrunk from paying it, yet, in this case, I claim to be my own master; no man, not even a father, has a right to destroy the happiness of another. If I had anything—were it but enough to buy food and clothing and a roof to cover us—of my own, I would work, I would slave for you till better times, and in the mean while our poverty would be happiness. But since, Heaven help me! I have nothing certain—I cannot, I dare not, ask you to run a risk so perilous.'

He spoke with vehemence, and trembled as he spoke, moved with o'ermastering love. Nelly trembled too; for had he but known it, she was on the very verge of passion's giddy height, while he thus held out his arms to her.

Her mother, as will be remembered, had informed her that Raymond would have an income of his own—though he was himself unaware of it—when he should come of age. If he had known it, how vehemently would he have urged his suit! When he should come to know it, how quickly would he renew his appeal! It was the foreknowledge of this that had caused her to lay such weight upon her mother's prejudice against his father, though indeed it had weight enough of its own. In her mother's present temper—and it was to the last degree unlikely that it would suffer mitigation—an alliance with Raymond, if it included the permission of the elder Pennicnick, would mean a practical separation from her remaining parent. The question that Raymond had put, 'Had anyone a right, even a parent, for a mere personal whim, to destroy the happiness of her offspring?' had at least as great a force with her as with himself. Indeed, it had a greater, for her disposition was less dependent, though not less filial. She knew how her heart would make common cause with his, when he should say, 'I am free to marry you; I have enough for both, though not to spare. Let us be happy.' But in accepting him she felt that she would be destroying for him all that is included in what the world calls prospects. Thanks to her, he would be a poor man all his life, and alienated from the father to whom he had hitherto been an exemplary son. Had she a right to force him to this sacrifice, because she loved him? or was it not because she loved him that she ought to save him from himself—from the results of his own generous passion? The answer was plain to her; and it must be given him now—at once—while his strongest arguments could not be urged against her. Yet every word she was about to use would be a dagger-thrust in her own breast.

'Raymond,' she said, 'there is no need to speak as you have

spoken ; I know your nature to its core. There is no man whom I esteem so much, or ever will be, or for whom I would do more than I would for you ; but the one thing I will not do, so help me Heaven ! is to consent to your own ruin. Listen to me, for what I say will never be recalled or altered. If you find it impossible to keep the word you passed to me six weeks ago, and behave to me as a dear friend and brother, I will not see you again. I have suffered—well, no matter what—from your absence from us during our late calamity. When the heart is sorrowful and very heavy, it yearns for friendship, and the more when it has but one or two friends. But I can bear your absence for ever, better than a repetition of such scenes as these. If you speak to me of love again, Raymond—it wounds me to the quick to say so, but I mean it—then speech between us two will be over ; you will have spoken to me for the last time.’

‘The last time !’ echoed the young man, like one who cannot believe his ears. ‘She will have spoken to me for the last time !’

‘Such is my fixed and positive resolve—a harsh one, you will say, but even harshness is sometimes necessary to secure obedience. Upon one side stand you and your love ; upon the other—forgive me for speaking of them as antagonistic, for it needs must be so—stand myself and my future. My mother and I are absolutely, as I understand, without resources, and from henceforward we shall both be dependent for the means of existence upon my personal exertions. I shall need all my wits, all my courage, all my strength, for this battle of life, for which I shall be armed with but a poor pencil and paint-brush. Do you not see, dear Raymond, how necessary it will be for me to be at least in freedom ? If, in addition to what is required of me, I am tied and bound to you, by an engagement however contingent upon circumstances, how is it possible that I can be my own mistress ? All my thoughts and all my time will be bespoken by the work before me ; I could not afford—to put the matter on its lowest ground, but still upon a high one, since another will be dependent on me—to have my mind disturbed by hopes so tender.’

‘But other girls, dear Nelly,’ pleaded Raymond, ‘find strength and motive in such hopes.’

‘Then I am not as other girls, or at least,’ she added hastily, ‘the circumstances in which I am placed compel me to be different. I know what is good for you, Raymond, and what is possible for me. Pray understand that I am resolute about this matter. You must promise me to be henceforth as my brother only, or we must be strangers altogether.’

‘But if my father does consent to our marriage, and gives us

fitting means, and if your mother should abate her unreasonable prejudices, in that case at least, darling, you will promise to be mine ?'

'I will promise nothing, Raymond,' answered the girl vehemently. 'It is cruel of you to demand it. What you ask is nothing less than a confession of love from one who has forbidden you to speak of love. If I should answer "yes," I should be bound to you as though all those impossible events of which you speak had actually taken place. It is not my wish to be so fettered, and still less so to fetter you. You are a free man, to marry whom you please.'

Raymond shook his head with a sad smile, but she went on without regarding it. 'And I also am free to begin my new life of labour—not in happiness indeed, but at least without the distraction and distress of groundless hope. Here is my hand, Raymond, a hand that has work to do in the world.'

Raymond took her hand, surely the whitest and tiniest that ever had to do with work, and pressed it in both his own.

'Good-bye—sister,' said he, tenderly.

'Good-bye—brother,' answered she firmly.

'But I thought brothers and sisters always kissed one another, Nelly ?'

The innocent simplicity of the young rascal's tone would have made his fortune in a stage play.

'I don't think that is necessary,' said she, turning very white.

'Then I won't ask it,' replied he with gravity, as he opened the door for her, and bowed her out.

Lover though he was, he was secretly delighted that she had not kissed him ; for it seemed somehow to signify that she was not quite prepared to play her part in the new relations she had herself established between them.

Nelly made no attempt to see her hostess, but started for home at once ; she had done her duty—or what she believed to be her duty—and in doing it had shown, as she flattered herself, no sign of weakness ; but it had in fact cost her very dearly. Her comfort was that it had been in truth for Raymond's sake, and not her own, that she had given him up : but it was but cold comfort. Light as her frame was, her limbs trembled under it, as she took her solitary way, and she felt depressed in mind as she was weak in body. The work before her in the world had seemed pleasant enough when it had been play, but it had had but small attraction for her in itself. Toil without pleasure, life without love, seemed henceforward to be her lot.

By the time she reached home, she had summoned up a smile

to meet her mother, but it was a relief to her to learn that she had retired to her own room, 'not wishing to be disturbed for an hour or so,' as the servant said. She threw herself on the sofa in the little drawing-room, and saying to herself, 'I will be strong and patient,' burst into tears; they were very bitter tears, but they did her good. The first thing she noticed, when the last had been shed, and she had dried her eyes, was that there was a space upon the wall where her father's picture had been wont to hang. She understood at once that her mother had taken it upstairs with her, and also that it was a tacit confession on her part that she was indeed bereaved.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RETURNED.

As the time drew on for the return of his father from China, Raymond Pennicuick began to be greatly excited, and so strangely that the state of his feelings was unintelligible even to himself. That he was pleased to be about to see the parent whom he had mourned as dead, alive and well, he took for granted; but something so very bitter was mixed with his cup of happiness, that the result was an ill flavour. It was not only that Captain Conway was dead, or had met his death under circumstances that must needs have been horrible and distressing, though of their precise nature he had not been as yet informed; but the consequences that had resulted from the false telegram oppressed him in various ways. It had been terrible to hear that his father was no more; but it was also terrible to find that his own marriage with Nelly, which that sad circumstance had seemed to ensure, was now farther off than ever. Nelly, indeed, as we have seen, thought it so out of all human probability, that she had forbidden the subject to be alluded to, and professed to have banished hope itself. And finally, there were those revelations of the family lawyer, which that gentleman probably regretted as much as Raymond himself did. Raymond had, of course, suspected much of what he was now compelled to know, but he had always given his father the benefit of all doubts, and this dutiful charity was no longer possible. The secrets he had thus incidentally learnt were not, indeed, crimes: they were only what society smiles at as peccadilloes; but there were certain pecuniary arrangements in connection with them, which made it necessary he should be acquainted with these matters, that he could not but regard as mean. And those arrangements had, of course, been made by his father himself. It was most unfortunate that he should have become possessed of such

particulars at the very time when the springs of duty were somewhat dry, and he had most need of his filial respect. And yet—so loyal was the young fellow's nature—the less he respected, the more he felt compelled to obey his father. He had portrayed to himself their first meeting at Southampton; the sight of the vessel as it neared the docks, the welcome on the deck, the *tête-à-tête* dinner at the 'Sun;' but, as it happened, these pictures turned out, as such so often do, but so many mental mirages—illusions of anticipation. Raymond got a telegram from his father from Cairo, in his usual concise style: 'Shall be at my rooms in the Albany on the 14th to dinner.' It was clear by the date that he was coming overland, which was rather surprising. Ralph Pennicwick never spent money extravagantly, unless to give himself pleasure, and a sea voyage had been hitherto always preferable in his eyes to a journey by railway. Raymond did not flatter himself that this haste could be caused by a desire on the traveller's part to clasp his only son in his arms, but he did venture to hope that it might be owing to some consideration for the Conways. His father must know how the widow and orphan yearned to hear particulars concerning their lost one; not, indeed, the details of his decease, which, on the contrary, it would be well to spare them, but how he looked and spoke in those last hours, and what fond farewells he might have sent them. It was important, too, for them to know as early as possible of what worldly goods (if any, alas!) he had died possessed.

On the day and near the hour appointed, Raymond turned his steps to his father's chambers. He had been there more than once of late to see that everything was in order for his arrival—a work of some supererogation, since Mr. Pennicwick's valet, Hatton, was already installed there, who had a keen eye for his business, sharpened by twenty years' experience of his master's ways. Most men of fortune, when they go abroad, take their body-servants with them; but, in this case, the master, though bent on pleasure, had always a frugal mind. He allowed the man a certain sum, which did not, however, amount to the board wages usually demanded by gentlemen's gentlemen, and, to use his own expression, let him 'run loose.' It was like turning a horse out to grass when you have no present use for him. And Hatton was of such a patient and contented nature—or seemed to be so—that he never missed his corn. It was wonderful how well, considering Pennicwick's harsh and overbearing character, master and man got on together; and though opportunities were by no means wanting to the latter to 'better himself' in other situations, he stuck where he was. If Ralph Pennicwick happened to say some morning, as he poured

himself out his cup of coffee, 'I am going to Egypt this afternoon; put my things to-rights here, and give the key of my rooms to the porter,' Hatton only replied, 'Very good, sir.' If the master chose to name the date of his return, the man was always sure to be at his post a day or two beforehand; and if otherwise, Mr. Hatton was always 'to be heard of' at the 'Coach and Horses, Groom Street.' Whether he was Jew or Christian, married or single, his master never inquired and never knew. I was once acquainted with a very stately and perfect butler who left his situation (and quite right too) because his employer evinced no sympathy with him: 'I ain't 'ad a word o' kindness, my lady,' said he, 'since I 'a bin in your service, and it's love, it's love, it's love, as makes the world go round.' But Mr. Hatton was not of this sentimental nature. Great confidence, however, was reposed in him by his master—so much so, that people used to express their astonishment at it; but Ralph Pennicuck was one who would soon have discovered if he was being robbed, and would certainly not have hesitated to prosecute the offender to the bitter end.

Hatton was a wiry little fellow, of middle age, who only by the most scrupulous care could prevent himself from appearing 'horsey;' but as it was, he looked the quiet impassive confidential valet to perfection. He was always very civil to Raymond, but not without a touch of patronage; and I am afraid he did not think very highly of his intelligence. 'The young 'un runs wonderful well in harness with his governor, considering,' he would remark to his intimates, 'but they ain't anything of a match. One is a couple of hands higher than the other in point of wits.'

From the terms of which frank criticism it must not be hastily concluded that Mr. Hatton was (while on service) otherwise than polished, grave, and reticent.

Mr. Pennicuck's chambers in the Albany were on 'the first floor, and in that portion of the building which, if you did not know in how fashionable a spot you stood, and also if it were but a trifle cleaner, you might take for a model prison. It seems as though, posted in the upper gallery, an intelligent warder might observe all that came and went, and all that was done in the great echoing place; in which case he would have needed to be a warder of philosophic temperament, and who would not have minded sitting up occasionally very far into the small hours.

Like all the rest, the chambers in question were guarded by double doors, and when the outside one was closed, or 'sported' as it is termed at college, it not only said 'not at home,' but meant it. The inmate might be within, but there was no means of disturbing him at his devotions or any other private pursuit in

which he might be engaged. To be sure, in some instances, as in this case, there was a little staircase within, leading to the valet's room, but it was as much as that gentleman's gentleman's place was worth to go out or in at unseasonable times. When the master would be private, the man was himself in quarantine.

The outer door was now open, and the inner, with its smart little brass knocker and bell handle (the bell of which, as in a stage play, tinkled immediately on the other side), presented itself to Raymond; but this he set down to the fact of Hatton's presence. He had rarely been more astonished than he was when, in answer to his summons, the man appeared, and, with a voice unusually grave and low, observed:

'Master is come, sir.'

'What! my father here already!' said Raymond.

'Yes, indeed, sir, more than two hours ago: he almost took me by surprise,'—by which Mr. Hatton meant to express the very extremity of the unforeseen. Then he added, in a little lower tone, 'You will see a great alteration in him, Mr. Raymond.'

'Indeed! Does he not look well?'

'Well, it is not only that; he looks altogether out of condition. He's been shuck, sir, you may depend upon it, sadly shuck.' And Mr. Hatton put his finger significantly (but very deferentially) to his nose, to express that that opinion was a confidential communication.

'I dare say he is tired with his long journey, Hatton,' answered the young fellow; and the next moment he was ushered into the traveller's presence.

For an instant Raymond hardly knew his father, so grizzled had the black beard become, and so shrunken was the sunburnt face on which it grew. The eyes in particular had a wavering and indecisive look which he had never seen in them before. The whole appearance of the man suggested not only fatigue but worry.

'Well, Raymond, my boy, how are you?' The voice even was changed; it had lost its habitual coldness; and if not genial, was at least conciliatory. Its tone, joined with his father's looks, at once went to Raymond's heart.

'I am very glad to see you home, sir, though sorry for the cause that has cut short your travel. You must have come very fast, without giving yourself much time for rest, I fear.'

'What, I look fagged, do I? Well, that is like enough. The heat on the voyage was frightful; after that cursed steamer even the railway carriage seemed like paradise; and when I got in it, I stopped there and came right on.'

'I am sure you must want rest and quiet, and you will find it here. Everybody is out of London.'

'Ah, I suppose so; the men are gone to the moors, and the women after them. What is your news?—remember, I know nothing.'

'Well, sir, I have not been much interested of late in public matters, the tidings from yourself and about yourself having monopolised my attention.'

'About myself? What do you mean?'

Ralph had been standing at the open window, with his eyes fixed on the flower-box that stood in it; but now he turned them sharply on his son.

'I mean the telegram that came by mistake, and for some time was of course believed, that the catastrophe which befell poor Captain Conway——'

'Ah, had happened to *me*,' interrupted Ralph Pennicuck indifferently. 'To be sure, I had forgotten that. I must seem like the man in the poem, who died and came back to receive but an iron welcome.

The hard heir strides about his lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

It must have been deuced unpleasant for you to find you had to disgorge.'

'Indeed, sir, I did not feel that,' said Raymond. 'There are heavier losses in the world than money losses.'

'You think so, do you?' Ralph Pennicuck was himself again as he said that. Contempt for the sentiment expressed, and for the person expressing it, were both conveyed in that short sentence.

'Yes, sir, I do,' said Raymond boldly. 'I think money a very inferior commodity as compared with affection.'

'Ah, you have never had enough of the former article to appreciate it, my boy. Unfortunately, what is enough for one—that is, if the one has been accustomed to his little comforts—is not enough for two, or you would have had a wider experience.'

Raymond did not reply. He could not help thinking of the lawyer's revelation to him—about which, of course, he could say nothing—respecting that 20,000*l.* over and above that of which he knew his father to be possessed; the phrase 'not enough for two' seemed woefully out of place. His father must surely have enough, at all events, to place in competence the widow and daughter of his best friend. He was longing to speak upon that subject, and it seemed strange that the opportunity had not been already afforded him—that his father had not yet let fall one word concerning the sad incident which had brought him prematurely home.

In the next sentence, delivered after a long pause, however, his father made allusion to it.

‘How are poor Conway’s widow and daughter?’

‘They are well in health, sir; that is, so I hear from Mrs. Wardlaw, for I have seen but little of them myself of late; but of course they are dreadfully cut up, and besides——’

‘How is it that you have seen so little of them?’ interrupted Ralph Pennicuck curtly.

‘Well, sir, partly her bereavement, and partly, I am afraid, the possibility of a change for the worse in her circumstances, have made Mrs. Conway disinclined for the society of even her old friends.’

‘Ay, a morose woman; that was always her character. And the girl?’

‘Nelly is very courageous, and makes up her mind for the worst; she actually thought of giving drawing lessons, and earning her own living by her pencil, if such a course should be necessary, which I most sincerely trust will not be the case.’

‘Certainly not; she need do nothing of the kind,’ answered Ralph Pennicuck emphatically.

‘I am delighted to hear you say so, father. I could not believe that Captain Conway had left no provision for their wants; it would have been most sad——’

‘Who said he had left provision?’ interrupted the other angrily. ‘What provision do you suppose a captain in a marching regiment, who had always to live abroad to support his family, was likely to leave? When I said his daughter need not support herself by her own exertions, it was because I, his friend, intend to take that burden upon me.’

‘That is very kind of you, sir,’ said Raymond; but——’

‘But what? Is there anything so extraordinary in an act of liberality, or do you think it extraordinary that your father should be the man to do one?’

He spoke with heat and very excitedly. Raymond answered, quietly enough, ‘I am not surprised—far from it—at your offering to assist them, sir; and indeed I took it for granted that you would do so.’

‘Quite right, quite right,’ replied the other; ‘though, mind you, I acknowledge no claim.’

‘Beyond the claim of friendship, of course not. I am sure you will proffer your assistance with all delicacy; but from what I have noticed, I am apprehensive that they will have scruples in accepting it. That is why I feel disappointed that it seems they have no means of their own.’

‘Of course it would be better if everybody could leave their

wives and children well provided for,' returned Ralph Pennicuck testily. 'Unfortunately, only one person in a thousand can do so. Conway, as we all know, was not one of the fortunate exceptions. You speak of the scruples of his family; why should they have scruples?'

'It is not "they," but one of them, of whom I was thinking. I do not agree with you that Mrs. Conway is morose; but she is rather peculiar, and——'

'She hates me like the devil—probably *more* than the devil—if that is what you mean by being "peculiar,"' interrupted the other.

Raymond was greatly embarrassed by this outburst, for he felt that what had been said was true. At the same time, it was creditable to his father that, in spite of his knowledge of Mrs. Conway's feelings towards him, he had the intention to benefit her.

'Antipathies are often removed by kindness, sir,' said he gently; 'though of course I was not alluding to anything of the kind; I referred to her independence of spirit, which would probably make her hesitate to receive a mere bounty.'

'She can either take it or leave it, for that matter; her obstinacy shall not affect my good intentions. I will settle some sum upon her daughter which will be sufficient for both of them.'

'You are very good,' said Raymond, and that doubtful phrase . . . for once really expressed his feelings. But at the same time he was far from satisfied that this benevolent scheme would bring forth fruit. He knew that Nelly shared in some degree her mother's independence of character, if not her antipathies, and would be slow to take her bread from another's hand; moreover, he felt that, as a dependent on his father's bounty, she would in his eyes be less eligible than ever as a wife for his son. He had intended to speak upon that matter, if any opening had offered itself, if his father had expressed that sorrow and tenderness for the family, and for his friend's memory, which he had ventured to hope; but the moment, it was clear, was far from opportune. There was a certain harshness in his father's tone, even when speaking of his own good intentions towards the widow and her daughter, that warned Raymond to postpone the pleading of his cause. Between the time that must elapse before the letter he had written to China could return and reach his father's hands, there would surely be better opportunities; only meanwhile he could not speak to Nelly on the subject, and she was sure to construe his silence as significant of failure.

Dinner had been brought in by this time, and while Hatton waited, it seemed natural enough that the conversation should be

confined to general subjects. Mr. Pennicuick appeared to be more interested in politics than had been customary with him of late years, and expressed his intention of sitting for a borough, if a good one (by which he meant a bad one) should happen to offer itself. But when the repast was over and they were left alone, he still abstained from speaking of the catastrophe that had befallen his friend. At this, Raymond, who knew his father to be far from sentimental, was greatly surprised, and as the evening wore on he felt it incumbent on himself to broach the subject.

‘I promised, as soon as I should have seen you, to run down to Richmond,’ said he tentatively, ‘in case you yourself should be unable to do so.’

‘Ah, very good. Perhaps you may be able to sound Mrs. Conway as respects her acceptance of the—the allowance we were speaking of; I should wish to behave handsomely in the matter; what do you say to 300*l.* a year?’

If Ralph Pennicuick, who of course was not aware that Raymond knew of that ‘nest egg’ of 20,000*l.*, expected an outburst of applause at this munificence, he must have been disappointed; the young man only answered with gravity, ‘It will, I think, be quite sufficient. Their tastes are very simple, and they have always been accustomed to live upon a little.’

‘Yes, but a little which is given as of right becomes a good deal, let me tell you, when it is given voluntarily,’ observed the elder Pennicuick. ‘You speak as if 300*l.* a year was to be picked up at every street corner. I named that sum, however, because I thought it a fitting one; if you think it less than it ought to be, I will add another hundred.’

Raymond looked up surprised, not, indeed, even now at the extent of his father’s liberality, which to his eyes seemed moderate enough, but at the effect of his own words. It occurred to him little less than astounding that any arguments of his, and far less any mere hint or intimation, should have altered his father’s views, and especially upon a matter of money. Hitherto, upon the few occasions when he had ventured to propose a freer disbursement of cash, whether in his own favour or that of others, he had met with a steadfast and contemptuous resistance.

‘I think it would be very gracious, father, to leave the ladies their choice. You could say they are the best judges of their own requirements, and that either 300*l.* or 400*l.* a year would be equally convenient to you.’

‘It is absurd to pretend there is no difference between 3 and 4,’ answered the other testily; ‘but make the offer your own way. I intend to act for their benefit, of course, but I don’t desire any

thanks—mind *that*,' he added sharply. 'I don't wish them to feel any sense of obligation, and still less do I wish them to express it.'

The sentiment was not out of keeping with his father's character; he was a man who did not care for thanks (and, to say truth, he seldom earned them), but the vehemence of his words and manner struck Raymond as remarkable.

'Of course, sir,' said he, smiling, 'they will not thank you if you don't like it. But are they not to hear your kind intentions towards them from your own lips?'

'No; I have no time at present to go down to Richmond. I have a great deal to do in London. You can say everything for me.'

'But I have nothing to say, father. With the exception of this generous offer, which I will take on myself to make known to them, since you wish it, I have absolutely nothing to tell them: I mean, as to Captain Conway's death. Of course they will be expecting particulars.'

'What nonsense! Did not I telegraph the particulars? Women don't want to have their minds harrowed by dreadful descriptions, surely. The poor fellow was put to death; is not that enough, even if it had happened in a civilised country? Do you not understand that, since it was in China, the details are terrible?' and into Ralph Pennicuick's face there came a look of horror that seemed, as it were, to illustrate his words.

'Still, sir, they will ask questions: I mean, as to what he said at the last.'

'I did not see him at the last. Did you not hear that I hurried off to Shanghae in hopes to get a pardon for him?'

'Yes, sir, everybody speaks of your strenuous efforts to save your friend: that part of the tidings seems the only one with any truth in it that at first reached us: though, as it was reported, it was Conway who was at Shanghae, and you who were condemned to death. But you look pale, father. I am sure you are fatigued with your long journey, and no doubt this topic is distressing to you.'

'It is *not*, sir,' exclaimed Ralph Pennicuick angrily; 'that is, of course it is not a pleasant topic, but I hope I can speak of it like a man. On the other hand, it did strike me that it was a very shocking one to discuss with Mrs. Conway and her daughter.'

'There is no doubt of that, father. It would make the matter easier for me, and, what is of more consequence, less painful to them, if I had any message to deliver.'

'There was none,' interrupted Ralph Pennicuick curtly; 'nothing, at least, but his blessings and farewells; you can imagine them, and say them yourself. The whole thing took

place in a few hours—I mean, from when he was arrested to the time I started off to Shanghai.

‘He left no written word, then—nor any will?’

‘Will? What is the use of a will, when a man has nothing to leave! Of his effects, such as they were, I took charge myself, and they are coming by the steamer. You would not have had me bring half-a-dozen great packing-boxes to the Albany, I suppose?’

It was evident to Raymond that his father was labouring under excessive irritation, doubtless produced by the unusual heat of the weather and exhaustion of travel, and he felt that he could do no better than leave him to his repose. He therefore took his leave, promising to look in the next evening and give him an account of his reception by the widow and her daughter.

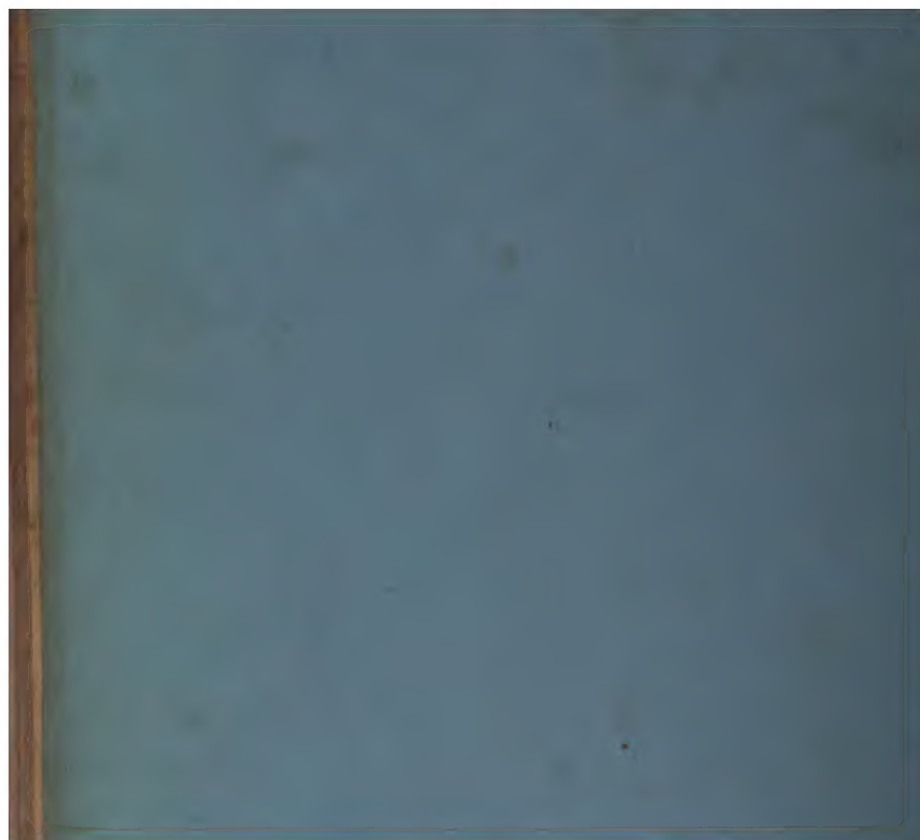
‘Do, boy, do,’ said Ralph in a conciliatory tone; ‘I shall be glad to hear about them, and shall be especially pleased if you persuade them to accept my proposition; the annuity will be paid without grudging, and let there be no fuss about it; and—yes, you may say this—after Mrs. Conway’s death, it will be continued to the girl.’

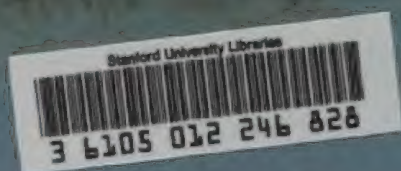
(To be continued.)











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